





# NO FACILITIES FOR WOMEN

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

THE author of this travel book is a young American reporter who, in the ten post-war years, covered the world from Manchuria to the Khyber Pass, from the Balkans to the Islands of the Pacific, acquiring in the process a mass of fascinating experiences. Inquisitive, intrepid, Miss Ebener let nothing deter her, even when there were no facilities for women. She was a guest of the Red Army in Manchuria, she met Madame Chiang-Kai-Shek, danced with Chou-en-lai, spent a week in the Indo-Chinese jungle with the foreign legion and did host of other exciting things.





# NO FACILITIES *FOR* WOMEN

BY  
CHARLOTTE EBENER



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*To my mother, who saved my letters and  
notes in the hope I would write a book*





## Introduction

I AM a woman reporter who has been traveling in odd corners of the world for ten years. This book is about some of the people I met—people like Chou En-lai, who danced a polka with me in Chungking's press hostel after V-J Day. Chou En-lai is now Foreign Minister of Communist China and the man who sent his countrymen across the Yalu to fight Americans in the frozen reservoirs of North Korea. I met some interesting women, too, women like Suzanne Travers, an English girl who fought with the French Foreign Legion in the jungles of Indochina without knowing or caring why. But this book is also about myself, a Milwaukeean with a conventional education, who left the Middle West and looked at the whole world as her neighborhood.

Like millions of other Americans, I first went abroad during World War II, aboard a troopship. I worked in India with the Red Cross, but after the armistice I did not go home. My eyes are shaped like an Oriental's, though my ancestors have been German or French for three hundred years. During the war in the Pacific I discovered that half the world has eyes shaped more or less like mine. In the Orient I could forget about the peculiarity that set me apart

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in my home town and at the University of Wisconsin: the oddity that made people stare at me in Chicago, Detroit, and Kansas City, where I worked as a reporter for I. N. S. before joining the Red Cross.

After the defeat of the Japanese, I asked my editor to send me to China. American pilots who flew the Hump told me there would soon be civil war in China. The World War was over, but the aftermath, the local wars, were just beginning. I had a journalism degree and two years' experience in general reporting. My editor decided to take a \$75-a-week chance on my turning out readable stories. In October 1945 I flew over the Hump to Chungking.

I knew how to report a sex murder or the price of beef on the Chicago livestock market. I could cover a meeting of the League of Women Voters or write articles on the problems of unmarried mothers. I could even write sports like a man. But could I write intelligently about China as it emerged from a decade of Japanese domination? I doubted it, but I wanted to try.

The Chinese civil war started three weeks after I arrived in Chungking. The experienced correspondents taught me how to prepare cables, the difference between a division and a regiment, how to interview a Communist so that he would reveal more than the party line. My cable desk in New York covered up my amateurish mistakes. But it gradually dawned on me that true reporting could not be done from a press hostel a thousand miles behind the lines or from colored pins stuck in maps at army headquarters.

I decided to go to Manchuria, the corner of Asia that gave China her Manchu emperors, where the Japanese found the resources and built the arsenals that enabled them to attack us at Pearl Harbor, and where the Russians moved in three days before the first atom bombs fell. Seven months after the war ended, the Russian Army was still in Manchuria and would not allow any Americans in. Press hostels were full of alarming rumors about what the Russians were doing

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• in China's northeast province. One February night in 1946 nine foreign correspondents decided they would crash Manchuria, without permission, to write facts instead of gossip. Why not try? The Russians couldn't do any more than send us back, we thought. They did do more, and we acquired a political education we never forgot.





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# I

## Meetings with the Russians

THE Mukden Express chugged along at its top speed of ten miles an hour, carrying nine nervous foreign correspondents surrounded by a fort of Army rations, bed rolls, typewriters, parkas, and whiskey. A freezing February wind howled through the paneless windows and the thermometer registered fourteen degrees below zero, inside the train. We blew on our fingers, stamped our feet, pulled down the earflaps on our new fur-lined Manchurian caps, and wondered how the Russians would welcome American correspondents who came bursting into their military occupied area, uninvited. It was 1756 and correspondents still thought Russians might be amused by brashness.

Studious Hank Lieberman of the *New York Times* stared at a map on his knees and observed that the Manchurian railway system looked like a spinal cord connecting China and Siberia.

"My God, Lieberman, stop talking about Siberia!" someone yelled. "We're getting closer to it every mile." There was a reflective silence for a few minutes. Then William McGaffin of the *Chicago Daily News*, who was our authority on

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the Russians because he had been to Moscow, offered some advice.

"We must not let the Russians see us scared or indecisive," he said, stroking his dignified new mustache. "We must insist our passports entitle us to travel in Manchuria because it is legally part of China. We must always insist on our legal rights." We were very sure of our legal rights, but as the train neared Mukden we wondered if we looked like spies, legally shootable at dawn. It is strange how one starts adopting Communist attitudes before encountering Russians.

Numb with cold and dazed with lack of sleep, we tumbled onto Mukden's deserted railway platform at three o'clock in the morning. No Russians were in sight. We laughed with relief, congratulated ourselves, and headed for a near-by Chinese hotel. As we stepped into the dim lobby, a young, blue-eyed Russian in uniform stepped up.

"I am Alexis Koralenk of the Documents Section, Red Army," he said in English. "By order of the commandant of Mukden you are invited to stay at the Soviet Army hotel."

We started to protest, following McGaffin's lead, but then two square-jawed Russian soldiers with fur hats walked up to us and fingered their burp guns. We meekly allowed ourselves to be taken to the Soviet Army hotel. Koralenk led us to rooms which had beds still warm from the Soviet officials who had been sleeping there only a few moments before. Then Koralenk summoned us together and asked to see our "documents for entry into Manchuria."

"We do not need any," said McGaffin firmly. "The Sino-Soviet Treaty of 1745 states Manchuria is part of China, and we have visas to China." Koralenk's eyes narrowed, but he said nothing.

We were taken to the hotel dining room and served a breakfast of beer, caviar, smoked salmon, fried eggs, a dozen different varieties of purple sausage, and thick slices of white bread. The waitresses were all Japanese, tiny girls wearing black cotton pantaloons and smocks, who ran in and out of

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the dining room in a breathless hurry. Some of the girls were very pretty; I wondered if they had been geishas entertaining the Japanese troops in Mukden, when the Russians marched in. Koralenk was raising a glass of vodka.

"I propose a toast to Soviet-American friendship," he said. We toasted. Koralenk rose again. "A toast to Stalin," he commanded. We drank. Then Reynolds Packard of the United Press hauled up his 230 pounds and raised his tumbler of vodka. "A toast to President Truman," Packard roared. Koralenk downed the toast to Truman in one gulp.

When we returned to our rooms, we noted that each of our doors had a Soviet soldier with a tommygun posted outside. Packard made an experimental move toward the stairs. The soldiers clicked to attention and shouted *nyet*. We slumped on our beds and awaited the next curious event.

At the respectable hour of ten o'clock, Koralenk called us together and announced that we would now meet the commandant of Mukden, Major General Andrei Kovtoun-Stankevich. We crossed a windy square with a huge stone monument topped by a Russian tank, and entered an office building flapping with enormous posters of Stalin, the hammer and sickle, and the star of the Red Army. The corridors were lined with Russian soldiers with mongoloid features who snapped to attention as we walked by with Koralenk.

General Kovtoun-Stankevich sat behind a neat desk, flanked by two civilians. He was so Russian, with his wide shoulders, thick neck, and square face, that he looked vaguely familiar, like a composite picture of all Red Army generals. But he wore only one decoration—the American Legion of Merit. The General motioned us to be seated in the nine wooden chairs set out in rows and ordered Koralenk to pass around a box of gold-tipped, elegant Russian cigarettes.

"What is your business here?" asked the General.

"We came to find out when the Soviet forces are going to withdraw from Manchuria, as the Sino-Soviet Treaty obliges them to do," answered lanky Phil Potter of the *Baltimore Sun*.

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The rest of us winced, but General Kovtoun-Stankevich laughed.

"When are the Americans going to leave China?" he replied. Potter decided the General liked frankness, so he pressed on.

"We've been hearing reports that the Russians are stripping Manchurian factories of their machinery. We came to see if those rumors were true or not." Koralenk stuttered as he made the translation. The two civilians standing on either side of the General stiffened. Kovtoun-Stankevich's smile froze.

"How are your hotel accommodations?" he asked. We said they were fine, and the General told us, politely, that he would have to notify his superiors of our arrival in Mukden. Until a reply came, we would be obliged to stay in the hotel. The General rustled some papers to indicate the interview was over.

We wondered how long it would take for Mukden to get its reply from Moscow. Apparently the General had decided that if Moscow ordered us to be held as prisoners, he already had us confined. If Moscow said we were to be guests, befitting allies, he had entertained us, too. Our meals were solemn ten-course affairs, served in the hotel dining room. Every evening we were led to the hotel ballroom to see Russian movies.

Usually we were accompanied by Colonel Ivan Kravchenko, whom we promptly dubbed "Bronco" because of his barrel chest and wrestler's gait. Bronco thought I was some sort of peculiar Mata Hari in the pay of the U. S. Government, but he was bewildered that I didn't act the part, and accept his invitations to private dinners and private English-Russian lessons. When I explained that it was a physical impossibility for me to swallow vodka, Bronco obligingly let me drink cherry brandy instead, even during toasts to Stalin.

Colonel Kravchenko always wanted to know who our leader was. We explained, over and over, that we were nine



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civilians, professional competitors, and we thought nine different ways about everything. Therefore we had no leader.

"But which of you was *appointed* leader before you came here?" he persisted. We tried to explain the private-enterprise system and how non-governmental newspapers compete with each other. Colonel Kravchenko seemed to think we talked nonsense.

Our third day in Mukden, General Kovtoun-Stankevich summoned us again. This time he wore gold epaulettes and rows of Soviet medals, not including the Legion of Merit. He genially ordered beer served all around and then mentioned casually that we could leave the hotel and see Mukden if we wanted to.

"But there is a strict ten P.M. curfew and much shooting at night," he cautioned. "You will understand. There are many gangsters in Chicago, too. It is not the Soviet Army's fault there is so much disorder and filth in Mukden. The Chinese are people of low culture. What can one do?"

Without any guards, we walked out of the General's office to Mukden's main street, which had been renamed Stalin Boulevard. A Chinese driving a pony cart took us over to Chinese Headquarters, where the Russians allowed Chiang Kai-shek to keep a general, a few token troops, and civil officials as a gesture of Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria. The "people of low culture" gave us a magnificent feast of bird's-nest soup, sweet-sour pork, and speeches in excellent English. Then they lent us a truck and two armed guards. "See for yourselves what the Russians have been doing during their seven months of military occupation of Manchuria," said a Chinese General.

We drove past miles of factories which had parts of their brick walls torn away so that heavy machinery could be removed without dismantling. We stopped in front of the huge plant of the Manchu Machine Tool Company, where the American soldiers captured on Corregidor lived, worked, and died as prisoners of the Japanese. Icicles hung from the roofs,

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where heavy electric motors had been torn from their overhead cranes. No machinery was left. On a wall was scrawled, in Russian: "Trans-Baikal War Trophy Commission," the name of the Soviet organization which systematically moved Manchuria's industrial heart to the new Soviet cities in Siberia.

"All Mukden's factories are stripped like this," said one of our guards. "Do you want to see more?" He seemed nervous and anxious to end the sightseeing tour. But he agreed to take us to a plant that made only consumer goods. We were taken to a vast textile factory that once had thousands of looms. Now it was only a skeleton of floors and walls. Every piece of machinery had been removed; only a few broken spindles lay about on the floor.

In the Sino-Soviet Treaty, Russia promised to give China "every possible economic assistance in the postwar period with a view to facilitating reconstruction and contributing to the cause of world peace." Until I saw Mukden, I thought the Russians would live up to treaties they signed, with great fanfare, in Moscow. But since that afternoon in the textile factory, I have read every treaty that talked of Russia's contributing to the cause of world peace with dread, realizing the terrible double meaning of the words. "World peace," to them, meant that only Russia was to be strong. And "facilitating reconstruction" meant the reconstruction of Russia herself, at the expense of her neighbors.

As we filed out the door of the textile factory, I heard what I thought were firecrackers. The other correspondents hit the ground—just as four bullets splintered the ice a few inches away.

"Down, you damn fool," yelled Packard.

I fell down on my stomach, too surprised to be frightened. "Why would anybody want to shoot at us?"

"I have a hunch that this is the Russian way of saying they don't want us to see any more," muttered Spencer Davis of

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the Associated Press. After five minutes of silence we ran to the truck waiting for us in the street outside the factory.

At dinner that evening Colonel Kravchenko blandly asked us if we were finding Mukden interesting.

"Very interesting, Colonel," replied Henry Keys, an urbane little Australian who worked for the *London Express*. "So are those excellent Soviet documentary films of yours. Will you show us another this evening?"

Kravchenko beamed with pleasure and pride, and promptly showed us the film about the Battle of Stalingrad again. We fondly hoped the Russians would think we were writing about Soviet cultural films as our typewriters clattered all that night.

At Chinese Headquarters the next morning we asked if our stories could get out of Manchuria without the Russians' seeing them. A tiny Chinese in a blue padded gown and with a runny nose thought the question was rather silly; of course the Chinese had a way of getting information past the watching eyes of the half-million Russians in Manchuria.

"I have helpers with strong legs and good hearts," he explained, wiping the slime from his nose with the back of a chapped hand. "Give your articles to me. I am a very patriotic Chinese." He snuffled loudly as we wrote out the address of the United States Information Service radio room in Peking and handed over our copy. He stuck the typewritten sheets inside his gown without reading them and circled the room to shake hands with each of us. "Good-bye, good joke on Russians, yes?"

We all felt our messenger might be shot if those damning stories were found on him, but none of us could find the words to warn him. Finally Robert Martin of the *New York Post* spoke up.

"Perhaps this job is too dangerous for you and your helpers. Never mind. We will send our stories later, when we go back to Peking."

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The little man started bowing himself out of the room. "No. Better stories go right now," he said. I wondered if he thought *we* might be shot.

One evening Colonel Kravchenko informed us that it was Red Army Day and invited us to the celebrations in the ballroom. Booted dancers spun across the floor to energetic music pumped out by accordions. A red-faced officer from the Caucasus periodically leaped three feet in the air and clicked his heels with admirable precision. Vodka bottles stood ten deep on the tables and everybody was very, very gay. The Russians insisted we catch up on the drinking and get in "a festive mood." By Colonel Kravchenko's personal order, I was excused from drinking vodka. But my eight male colleagues had to drink all the toasts to the Red Army, at the rate of about one per minute.

Colonel Kravchenko danced me around the room with a hop-one-two until he needed refreshment, then turned me over to Alexis Koralenk, who preferred slow waltzes. Koralenk seemed in a malleable state of mind. I asked him whatever became of the Japanese Army that was caught in Manchuria at war's end.

"The Japanese troops are all in Siberia now," he replied, very matter-of-fact.

"All seven hundred and four thousand?"

"Where are the Japanese the Americans caught?" replied Koralenk.

"We are sending them all back to Japan."

Koralenk gave a cluck of derision. "Why? Japan is already overpopulated. Why don't you put them to work for you—is that not more logical?" I don't think it occurred to Koralenk that the logical solution might not be humanitarian.

He turned me over to a group of Red Army lieutenants who could speak nothing but Russian. Nevertheless, they decided to teach me Russian folk dancing, especially the step requiring me to get down on my haunches and throw my legs out. When my aching legs could stand no more, I rejoined

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Kravchenko's table, where I discovered the other correspondents had downed the required number of toasts to Red Army marshals and were slumped in their chairs. The only one who seemed capable of movement was Lieberman, and he couldn't talk clearly. I fled upstairs and tried to lock myself in my room, but the key didn't seem to fit. I was still juggling with it when Kravchenko staggered down the corridor and embraced me with a good-humored hug, paying no attention to my *nyets*.

So far Kravchenko had treated me with courtesy, and I didn't want him to spoil his record. I kicked him. He slipped to the floor. I headed blindly for the back stairs which led to the hotel's kitchen. Japanese girls washing dishes surveyed me a moment and then guessed—apparently from experience—that I needed a hiding place. They put me in a large potato bin, hastily piled rotting potatoes over me, and closed the storeroom door. After what seemed like hours to me, the girls placidly unplied the potatoes, brushed me off, and led me to the back stairs, where Lieberman was searching for me.

"I saw two Russians carrying Bronco down the corridor. He can't walk," said Lieberman. "Did you have to defend your honor?"

"I didn't wait to find out. He was drunk."

"You better keep out of sight until this party is over." Lieberman pushed me to the bathroom of his room, instructed me to bolt the door, and then went out, locking the outside door. Every fifteen minutes or so he came back, dragging one of the other correspondents recovering from vodka paralysis. When we were all together again, we held a meeting. In order to avoid any more "incidents," we would get out of town, we decided.

The first train out was bound for Changchun, two hundred miles north, deeper in Manchuria. The coaches were crowded with Russians and we expected momentarily to be put out in the Manchurian snowdrifts. Lieberman, who knew

a little Yiddish, spotted a Russian who looked as if he might speak a little Yiddish, too, and used him to spread the word that we were nine journalists on a trip sponsored by General Kovtoun-Stankevich himself. As proof, Lieberman described the wonderful Red Army party we had attended. Apparently the Russians decided we must be on the train with official permission and nobody asked to see our passports or tickets. But a broad, pink-faced Russian woman, wearing the uniform of a captain in the Red Army, loudly remarked in German: "Americans have no culture." Her tone was aggressive and we thought she wanted to get into an argument. We pretended not to understand German and turned our attention to the countryside.

Lines of frozen willows marked the boundaries of forgotten warlords. The old soldiers who had set out those trees as their military frontiers must have been different from the pompous strategists who designed the static Great Wall of China. Perhaps the warlords realized that Manchuria, set where it is in the world, would have new masters every generation. Willows can be more easily readjusted than walls. Nothing stirred on the flat snow-covered fields, striped with frozen streams. A gray sky, the color of lead, promised more snow.

We had no cigarettes and our stomachs were gnawed with hunger. The Russians carefully avoided looking at us. I wondered who their leader was. The young woman in the captain's uniform did most of the talking, and unlike the rest, she occasionally turned our way and gave us a rude stare. She wore a medal over her left breast. A partisan heroine, perhaps. When she passed us, on her way to the washroom at the end of the coach, she tilted her head arrogantly, as if she were an eighteenth-century queen walking through a group of smelly subjects. Packard winked at her. She looked shocked at such bourgeois behavior.

As we stepped off the train onto Changchun's railway platform, four Soviet soldiers with tommy guns covered us. They

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said nothing, but prodded us into American lend-lease jeeps. We were driven to the local Soviet Army hotel. Armed guards were posted at our doors immediately, and this time there was no welcoming banquet, no toast to Soviet-American friendship.

"I guess our stories got out," Packard said. "And Moscow didn't like them."

An hour later the guards rounded us up and drove us to the headquarters of General Feodor Karlov, the Russian commander of Changchun. We sat in an outer office which smelled of coal gas, beer, and strong cigars. After an hour of waiting, a pretty, slim, blue-eyed, black-haired Russian girl dropped in.

"The General is too busy to see you now," she said in perfect English. "All the cars are busy, too. You will have to walk back to your hotel."

Changchun was about twenty degrees below zero that day. Our feet and fingers ached with cold as we stumbled through the snowdrifts looking for the way back to our hotel. The wind stung our eyes, and the tears rolling down our cheeks turned to ice. Occasionally we blundered into streets staked with barbed wire and red flags. But we were in no mood for sightseeing and got back to the hotel as soon as we could.

That evening a Russian officer claimed we had entered Red Army installations in Changchun without permission. We denied it. Then we learned that the streets with barbed wire and flags were the Red Army installations. We started to explain that we had only been trying to find our way back to the hotel, but the officer interrupted us.

"A document describing your illegal movements has been submitted to higher authorities," he said. I asked if I could have a doctor visit me because I had pains in my diaphragm every time I breathed. The Russian nodded, clicked his heels, and left.

Late that night a Japanese doctor stepped into my room,

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hauled out a stethoscope, and told me I had pleurisy. "It might develop into pneumonia," he warned. "You must leave Changchun immediately." He spread his lips, revealing his splendid gold inlays, bowed from the waist, and slid out of the room. I decided to get sicker and sicker. Meanwhile the other correspondents demanded the right to send a telegram to Peking telling the American Marines there of my predicament. We hoped the Marines might send up a plane for us.

The Russians allowed the telegram to be sent from Changchun's post office, and we waited two days for an answer. Then a Russian officer summoned us together. "You will all fly back to Peking on a Chinese plane tomorrow," he said. It was clear the Russians didn't want us in Changchun any more than we wanted to be there. But, before we left, General Feodor Karlov decided he would look over his departing guests.

His office was empty except for a mahogany desk and ten-foot portraits of Stalin and Lenin. He did not ask us to sit down and there were no chairs for us. Stiff as a ramrod, he stood behind his desk and shifted his cold eyes from one face to the other. He had a narrow, bony face and bloodless lips. Somehow he looked far more German than Russian. His pretty secretary, standing at his side, translated his short, staccato sentences. The General was telling us more about our violating Soviet regulations while under his command.

Plainly General Feodor Karlov did not intend to say a word that might be quoted in American newspapers. Suddenly he said: "Enough." The interview was over.

Changchun's airfield was a sheet of glassy ice. The old American-built plane seemed to have a lot of superfluous wires dangling from it. The engines were being warmed, and they sent off a shower of sparks. We hesitated. John Dowling of the *Chicago Sun* glanced at our Russian guards, then at the Chinese pilot in the nose of the plane.

"I pick the Chinese," Dowling said, and led us aboard. We



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had been airborne less than ten minutes when our right engine sputtered and died. We stared at the motionless propeller, beads of nervous perspiration glistening on our foreheads. The pilot banked steeply and made a 180-degree turn. Just then two Russian fighter planes screamed past us, one above our plane and one below.

"My God, are they trying to kill us?" Packard muttered. The plane shuddered from end to end, creaked, and we lost altitude very rapidly. We skimmed above snowy fields, veered, straightened, and then skidded to a safe stop at the edge of Changchun's airfield. Our pilot threw open the door of the cabin with a delighted grin.

"Close shave, wasn't it?" he said, pushing back his sun goggles. He was Chinese, but his accent was pure American. We all began to laugh, with almost hysterical relief. The pilot joined in. "I trained at Thunderbird Field, Arizona," he said. There was no time to say anything more. Two Russian soldiers, their everlasting tommy guns pointed at us, motioned us off the plane and to the communications shack. We waited, dazed and shaken, for half an hour, under their stare. Then a Red Army officer entered the shack and read another document.

"Contrary to Red Army orders, you instructed the pilot to turn north for Harbin and land there. The Soviet fighters prevented this further violation. Your further infraction of Soviet regulations is being forwarded to higher authorities." He walked out of the communications shack, followed by the two guards, and we were left alone. The charge was so absurd that we stared at each other, and then argued whether we had heard him aright.

A little Chinese timidly appeared at the door, and told us: "The Russians are through with you." He suggested we follow him. Not knowing what else to do, we climbed aboard his truck and were taken to a Chinese hospital. It was permeated by the sickly-sweet smell of rotting flesh. The floors of the toilet rooms were overrun with feces and urine that

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had collected there for weeks. Rats ran down the corridors. A nurse apologized for the filth, but explained that Changchun's bubonic-plague epidemic was so bad nobody would come to the hospital to work any more. She advised us to stay in our clothes and not touch anything, as the rooms we were in had been cleared of dead bubonic-plague patients only a few hours before our arrival. "But stay here for the night," she added. "It is safer for you here than on the streets of Changchun after dark."

We spent the night huddled together, sitting on the floor, vowing we would submit expense accounts that would make our editors turn bald. "Let's agree this is a luxury hotel that cost us twenty dollars a day," said Keys. Silently each one must have wondered if he would ever send New York a padded expense account again.

The next morning we went to Changchun's railway station and discovered that the Russians were indeed through with us. The guards at the station took elaborate precautions not to see us. As we passed them, they turned their backs, or tied their shoelaces, or busied themselves inspecting their tommy guns. Apparently higher authorities had instructed them to let us get on the southbound train.

This time our Russian fellow passengers spoke to us in German with astonishing friendliness.

"We came from Moscow by train across Siberia," bragged a young lieutenant. "The trip took only six days." He and his brother officers were now bound for Port Arthur, the Manchurian city on the Yellow Sea. "It is a very good place," he added. "We will be stationed there for five years and therefore we have our wives and children with us." He joggled his young son on his knees as he spoke. His sweet-faced wife sat at his side, wearing a shapeless dress of sleazy, rust-colored fabric. Occasionally she touched her husband's sleeve, perhaps reassuring herself that he was beside her. Their faces radiated optimism, as if they were certain life in Port Arthur would be better than the life they had in Russia. Few Ameri-

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cans, I thought, would look forward with such Spartan relish to five years in a Manchurian city.

We had to change trains at Mukden and we nervously paced the railway platform, hoping we would not be invited to stay at a Soviet Army hotel again. Suddenly our little Chinese messenger with the runny nose appeared. Now he was wearing a new uniform, indicating he was a Major General in the Chinese Army.

"I was promoted a few days ago because of my good work," he explained, adding that he had been made Major General in one leap from civilian status. "Your articles were delivered in Peking. Everybody knows what the Russians are doing in Manchuria now and there are street demonstrations in the Chinese cities. There are angry crowds in front of the Soviet Consulates, saying bad words about the looting." The new Major General giggled with happiness. "So now the Russians are leaving Mukden." We laughed, incredulous. He looked up at us with a hurt expression. "Believe me," he said. "With my own eyes I have seen flatcars, loaded with arms and baggage, and trainloads of Russians moving *out* of Mukden. Every day more troops, more freight cars leave."

"Where do you think they are going, General?" asked Davis, scarcely able to repress his amusement.

"North Korea, I think," replied the Chinese. "I do not know why."

We didn't know why, either. None of us believed that the Russians would move out of Mukden just because of Chinese street demonstrations. We decided the Red Army was having some winter military maneuvers.

The southbound all-Chinese train steamed up to the platform and within five minutes there was not an inch of space inside. Coolies, who could not afford the price of a ticket, scrambled up to the roofs of the cars.

"The people have seen the Russian troops moving and they think that means there is going to be war here soon," explained the Major General. "Everybody is trying to get out

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of Mukden these days." He used his new rank to clear nine seats for us and then waved us off cheerfully, not bothering to wipe his nose.

The train jerked through the sub-zero night, stalling, puffing, hissing. The boilers didn't seem to be connected with the wheels. After twenty hours of numbing cold we arrived at a town called Chinchow, outside the Russian occupied area. A Chinese informed us an American Marine plane was waiting for us at a near-by airfield.

As we scrambled off the train, I saw a conductor carrying the body of a Chinese woman who had frozen to death on the roof of our car during the night. She wore only a gunny sack over her black cotton trousers and her feet were tied in rags. Then I heard a baby whimper. It was wrapped in the padded jacket of the dead mother, who was still holding it. The conductor was unclasping the dead mother's arms and taking the child from her. I hurried off, after the others, and thought of nothing but that child all the way to Peking.

Telegrams were piled up at the desk of the hotel, waiting for us. International News Service wanted me to "send a human interest angle." I felt a sudden surge of guilt. The other correspondents were jubilantly laughing and showing off their cables. They were congratulatory, telling them of bonuses, front-page play. There was no doubt that our Manchurian expedition pleased our editors enormously. One went so far as to call the trip "historic journalism." I could feel no triumph whatever. Haunted by the memory of the dead mother and the human burden I had ignored, I found I couldn't even write a decent story. Discouraged, I left my typewriter and went over to the American military hospital to find out why the pains below my breasts were getting worse.

"Honey, you don't have pleurisy," said the Marine doctor who examined me. "You have three cracked ribs." I remembered then that the pains began a few hours after Ivan Kravchenko's bear hug.



## II

# Protective Custody

MANCHURIA was a setting for the postwar generation's main contest—the struggle for power between the Russians and the Americans in Asia. Three weeks after the last Russian troops left Mukden, in March 1946, a handful of American soldiers arrived. The Yanks flew in with thirty-two-year-old Brigadier General Henry Byroade, a West Pointer with engineering experience, exceedingly handsome, intelligent, and likable. Hank Byroade was head of the “Truce Teams” which were supposed to stop the fighting between Chiang Kai-shek's troops and the Chinese Communists. The Truce Teams assigned to Manchuria were ordered to “readjust military matters” and at the same time “keep clear of places still under Russian occupation.”

General Byroade pondered this problem for a few days, and then decided he ought to have a talk with General Lin Piao, commander-in-chief of all the Chinese Communist Armies in Manchuria. Byroade was optimistic and adventurous, a sort of young Eisenhower, who got along well with everybody, including Chinese. After a week of crackling radio signals, General Lin Piao specified the location of a

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secret Manchurian airfield which would receive an American plane.

One fine April morning the plane, called *The Dreamer*, took off from Mukden and landed on a strip marked with white cloth panels, only forty miles from the Korean border. Byroade landed the plane himself and acknowledged the greetings of peasants bearing banners reading: "Ten Thousand Years of Peace."

In a near-by country courthouse, the youngest General in the American Army confronted the youngest General in the Chinese Communist Army. General Lin Piao was a foot shorter than General Byroade and had no diplomatic experience, but he was considered the most cunning military strategist in Asia. General Lin gave General Byroade a feast, followed by speeches. Byroade said: "America's position here in Manchuria is impartial. We Americans hold no viewpoint. We are here to bring two viewpoints together."

During the Korean war, Henry Byroade became Assistant Secretary of State, and General Lin Piao gave the overextended American Marines in North Korea the roughest handling in their history.

The Chinese—both Communist and Government commanders—usually treated the American Truce Teams as busybodies and nuisances, tolerated only for their jeeps, radios, planes, and rations. When fighting flared up between the Communists and Chiang's troops, any American peace-maker who tried to stop it was "detained for his own protection," as far behind the lines as possible. The Americans often listened to machine guns blasting away truces signed only a few hours before. Sometimes they woke up in the morning to find their two opposing armies had vanished and were off fighting somewhere else. But the Yanks remained patient, idealistic, and determined.

Even G.I.'s, serving on the Truce Teams as message coders or drivers, wanted to bring peace to Manchuria more than they wanted to go home. They had all volunteered for the



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duty, and they regarded their buddies enjoying Shanghai's night clubs as "knuckleheads."

One evening American correspondents filed into Henry Byroade's Mukden hotel room to find out how the truce negotiations were doing on the highest level. They saw three generals—one American, one Chinese Communist, and one Chinese Government—bending over a bathtub full of water playing with a toy motorboat. Byroade waved us out of the room. Afterward he explained, rather sheepishly, that the Chinese Communist and Chinese Government generals only insulted each other if they were seated around a conference table. "But they will talk about a truce while they are playing with that toy motorboat, so help me God," Byroade said. "I guess the motorboat reminds the Chinese generals of their youth, when they were friends and classmates at the same school." General Byroade confessed he bought the toy motorboat in a Mukden bazaar, for his young son.

But Mukden's truce negotiations were interrupted by an alarming radio message from Chiang Kai-shek's officials 200 miles north, in Changchun. "Russian troops have started pulling out of Changchun. City encircled by Chinese Communist Armies. Local Peace Preservation Corps outnumbered two to one," it read.

The Truce Teams could not do anything about Changchun because their orders read: "Keep clear of places still under Russian occupation," and there were still some Russians there. However, there was no reason why American correspondents couldn't go to Changchun to watch the Russian withdrawal and the subsequent Chinese Communist attack, if they didn't mind getting captured.

Lieberman, Packard, Tom Masterson of the A.P., George Weller of the *Chicago Daily News*, and I flew to Changchun in a tiny Chinese Army observation plane. At Changchun's railway station we discovered the last train of Russians was about to pull out, bound north for Harbin, near the Siberian frontier. The last car of the last train was a sort of drawing

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room with wide glass windows. There stood General Feodor Karlov, stern as ever, surrounded by half a dozen of his colonels. They were drinking a toast.

The train started to move. Lieberman, Packard, and I, who had been General Karlov's unwilling guests only a month before, took out our handkerchiefs and waved good-bye. General Karlov gave no sign indicating he saw us or recognized us. We walked out of the railway station, feeling very pleased with ourselves for our gesture of defiance. Then we heard machine-gun fire, coming from the direction of the airfield. The battle between Chinese Communists and Chiang's troops for Changchun had started, just as the last Russian car passed the city limits.

In theory, the Soviet Army had adhered to the Sino-Soviet Treaty and handed over the capital of Manchuria to Chiang's officials. Actually, of course, the Russians took infinite care to see that they left only after the city was surrounded by Chinese Communists. Chiang's officials, without Regular Army troops to defend them, would fall like plums into the hands of the Communists.

At Changchun's city hall we found the Chinese Government's Mayor, a bouncy, jolly, pink-checked Chinese named C. M. Chao, who told us he was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin. Delighted at meeting a fellow alumnus, he put his arm around me and sang our campus ditty, "If you want to be a Badger just come along with me." He led us to his ten-room house in a tree-lined suburb, where we were all installed as honorary Badgers.

By nightfall Changchun's airfield was lost to the Communists. Then we heard the rumble of tanks. "These must be Communist tanks," said Chao. "The Russians never let our Peace Preservation Corps have any tanks. General Karlov said tanks were a menace to peace preservation."

Mayor Chao ordered his cook to prepare hundreds of doughnuts. "They are very practical for a siege," he explained. "Doughnuts are filling, good, and edible anytime."



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I sewed an American flag out of red silk sofa cushions, a white sheet, and one of Mayor Chao's blue gowns. Lieberman hung the flag from our second-floor balcony, hoping it would discourage Communist tanks from pointing their guns at our house.

Suddenly the lights went out and Changchun was in total darkness. The experienced war correspondents figured the Communists cut the power lines so they could infiltrate the city without being seen. We wondered how many Communist soldiers were sneaking past our house that night, but we decided not to light a candle and attract their attention. We sat in the inky blackness playing guessing games, munching doughnuts. Without electricity, not a drop of water trickled from our chromium faucets. Chao admitted doughnuts were not a good idea when there was nothing to wash them down with.

The next morning the battle for Changchun began. Stray bullets smashed our window panes and sprinkled tiny pieces of glass over us. We piled the blue mohair sofas and chairs against the windows, emptied the china cabinets, and arranged them into bunkers. Lamp shades made fine helmets, at least against flying glass. We lay down on our stomachs and waited.

A few minutes later shells began to scream over the roof. Artillery shook the pictures off the walls. I had never been in a battle before and I listened carefully to the conversation of the veterans lying on each side of me, trying to glean some information as to what was happening.

"They're still falling a mile away," Weller was saying. Then there was a terrible whoom and a thud that shook the floor.

Packard curled into a ball. "Mortar. Bad estimate. That landed right in the back yard."

Mayor Chao, in an opposite corner of the room, started singing "On, Wisconsin! On, Wisconsin!" at the top of his lungs. He pumped his arms up and down like a cheer leader.

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"All together now, show some spirit: 'On, Wisconsin! On, Wisconsin!'" Abashed, Weller of Harvard, Masterson of Notre Dame, Lieberman of Columbia, and Packard of Bucknell sang: "Fight, fellows, fight, fight, fight, we'll win—" The song died as another mortar shell pounded into our garden. I wondered what a mortar looked like, but it did not seem the time to ask.

The artillery and mortars kept up all that day. We were covered with plaster shaken off the walls, and fear was evident in all our faces. From moment to moment we expected a direct hit, but we had no idea what was going on around us, or who was winning the battle. It seemed a ridiculous way to be a war correspondent. I turned to Packard, a veteran of the Ethiopian and Italian campaigns. "Is this the way a battle is when it's *real*?" I whispered.

Packard groaned with sarcasm. "Little girl, no battle was ever realer than this one." The others laughed and I felt my face flush with embarrassment.

Weller came to my rescue. "I know what you mean. Yes, this is real war correspondence," he said. "We correspondents never know what the hell is happening. We just try to save our own necks, and record the tiny personal victories and defeats in front of our own eyes. Later the generals add them up and announce who won and what the strategy was."

Toward dark, the terrible din of artillery stopped. We heard only sporadic firing during the night. The next morning we peeked out of our windows at deserted streets. There was an odd silence for several hours. The war correspondents started arguing among themselves as to whether the battle was over or not. Lieberman, Weller, and Masterson decided to stay in the house. Packard and Chao decided to get into the Mayor's car and make a quick dash to the center of the town. I knew Packard would try to get a story out from the military radio in Chinese Army Headquarters, and I did not want to be beaten on my first battle. I climbed into the car with Packard and Chao.

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Changchun was a planned garden city, laid out much like Washington, a model of civic beauty built by the Japanese as the showplace of their Pacific empire. Broad boulevards led to Tatung Circle, rimmed with graceful, columned public buildings. In one of them we found Changchun's Peace Preservation Corps, huddled behind rice-bag barricades. Their Commanding General, Chen Tsi-chen, was sitting in front of a field radio, sending messages to Mukden. He seemed oblivious to the coolies who were bringing in wounded on litters made of blood-soaked gunny sacks.

Chao suggested we could have a fine view of the battle from the roof. We climbed up with him and surveyed avenues and parks that seemed to be deserted. Then an American lend-lease plane appeared, dropping canisters of ammunition for the Peace Preservation Corps on the roofs of other buildings. We saw the parachutes float over the monument built in honor of the Russian Air Force, and then drop gently into the waiting hands of Communists who ran out from their hiding places behind trees and doors. That drift of wind, which carried ammunition to the wrong side, cracked morale completely. All the soldiers left the roofs for the rice-bag barricades inside. There was no one to man the machine guns pointed down the avenues at the advancing Communists.

"Do you know how to work one of these things?" asked Mayor Chao, pointing to a machine gun. Packard said he didn't. "Neither do I," sighed the Mayor. "Rural electrification was my specialty at the University of Wisconsin."

Suddenly the Communists started running down three of the avenues leading toward Tatung Circle, toward us. I watched them and their glinting bayonets as if it were a newsreel I had seen somewhere before. Packard grabbed my arm and pulled me off the roof and down the stairs. We nearly collided with four ragged Russian prisoners wearing Soviet uniforms. Their Chinese guard, who had captured them in a skirmish, asked General Chen if he should shoot

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them. General Chen said no. Then he bent over his radio set again.

"He's telling Mukden not to parachute any more supplies because he is going to have to surrender Changchun," Chao said.

"Let's get out of here," yelled Packard. Then he had an afterthought, and turned to the General at the radio set. "Tell Mukden five American correspondents are going to surrender, too," he said. With that, we ran out of the door, to the Mayor's car parked on a side street. We sped down one of the avenues leading out of Tatung Circle to our suburb, with sniper bullets hitting our fenders. We made the house with a few minutes to spare.

From our kitchen window we watched a line of Communists creeping through the budless alders of our garden. Their brown uniforms were barely distinguishable from the thawing earth. In a neighboring garden another Communist platoon was digging trenches and setting up artillery. But it was evening before someone pounded on the door and demanded, in Chinese, that we open up.

By the light of a candle, Chao unbolted the door. A husky Communist corporal and five men, hand grenades and bayonets ready, clumped into our entrance hall. At that moment Weller descended from the second floor. The Communist corporal eyed him a moment and then joyfully went for him with open arms.

"*Tovarich!*" shouted the corporal, hugging Weller.

"*Mei-kuo*," said Weller coldly, disengaging himself. At the word *Mei-kuo*, Chinese for "American," the corporal backed away and stared at us. Then he posted the five men to guard us and left the house. Weller had a ruddy face, blue eyes, thick neck, and wide shoulders; he could easily be mistaken for a Russian. Apparently these Chinese Communists attacking Changchun were Russian-trained—why else would Weller be greeted with a fine Russian word like *tovarich*?

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Our guards silently stared back at us and would answer none of Mayor Chao's questions.

An hour later, a Chinese Communist captain came to the house with sixty soldiers. Paying no attention to us, they lugged a machine gun up the stairs and set it up on our second-floor balcony, next to our American flag. The soldiers tried the machine gun a few times and then the captain descended the stairs, moving with catlike grace. He motioned us to gather in the sun room at one end of the house. He was very young, perhaps eighteen, and his face was smeared with mud and perspiration. He wore a clean white bandage on his head.

Mayor Chao introduced himself as "Mr. Wang," a correspondent for the respected Chinese newspaper *Ta Kung Pao*. This house, Chao said, was the Changchun press hostel and that was why five American correspondents happened to be there. The captain replied that the press hostel was now a military post and we were to keep out of the way. We were ordered to stay in the sun room because the captain and his sixty men were going to occupy the rest of the house. He and Chao talked in low voices for a moment; then the Communist captain shut the door. Mayor Chao sank down on the floor, discouraged for the first time. We asked what the captain had told him.

"The Communists won the battle for Tatung Circle. After we left, the General decided to lead a final charge. He went out the front door of that building—the revolving door—carrying a pistol. He was followed by about 300 of his men. The Communist captain told me how easy it was to shoot down the Peace Preservation Corps, as they went out, single file, through that one revolving door. It was a gallant thing to do, I suppose, but so foolish."

"Is the General dead?" asked Packard.

"No. He fell with only a leg wound, but most of the men who followed him are dead. The soldiers who stayed inside

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the building are prisoners of the Communists now. There is still some fighting, in separate localities. The captain said he is in charge of mopping-up operations in this suburb."

I remembered one of the General's last acts was to spare the lives of the four Russians who had been captured fighting with the Chinese Communists. Now these Russians probably were feasting with the Chinese Communist General, raising glasses, shouting *tovarich*. Too weary to think any more, I stretched out on the floor and fell asleep.

In the morning I found a uniformed leg lying across my stomach. The leg belonged to a boy, not more than fourteen years old, wearing odds and ends of uniform. He was sound asleep and he was having a pleasant dream, apparently. His mouth was formed in a slight smile. One hand clutched his cap with its Chinese Communist insignia and the other hand was laid, as if it were a favorite toy, on the butt of his rifle.

For the next five days our house was a military post, and we learned why China's countryside tolerated Communist troops. Every bag of rice, every packet of tea, every kettle borrowed from our kitchen was recorded on a receipt which we kept. Everything taken was returned out of Communist stocks before the soldiers left.

The soldiers proudly sang us their "marching song of eight commandments." It went:

*"Never take so much as needle and thread from the  
people.  
Do this and the people will support and welcome us.  
Now come eight points to be observed;  
Always remember these eight and never forget them.  
First comes propaganda; make this perfect.  
Always keep it in mind; never forget propaganda.  
Second comes cleaning up your quarters at reveille;  
Sweep and scrub both inside and outside your shelter.  
Third, when you speak be amiable:*

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*Your most important work is getting in touch with people.*

*Fourth, always buy and sell at a fair price; You're forbidden to take anything by force from the people.*

*Fifth, return whatever you have borrowed;*

*Return everything yourself to the lender and never lose anything.*

*Sixth, if you damage anyone's possession Pay for it fully and pay right off.*

*Seventh, treat your prisoners humanely;*

*The main job is getting the enemy dispersed.*

*Eighth, dig your latrine wherever you camp;*

*You're strictly forbidden to relieve yourself at will.*

*If you break these rules*

*The law of discipline of the revolution will not forgive you.*

*Soldiers of the revolution must watch over each other.*

*Only in this way can the mobilization of the people be ensured.*

*When the people everywhere have been organized, The next day a new China will be born."*

The soldiers called themselves "volunteers in the fight for peace." They were all the sons of Shantung farmers who had been loaned to the Communist Army in return for land.

On April 18 the battle for Changchun was over and the Chinese Communists had won their first city in Asia, a modern community of 800,000 people. In one enormous leap, the Chinese Communists soared from crude farmhouses and candlelit caves to massive buildings with elevators, steam heat, and marble floors. The Communist infantry took the first automobile rides of their lives down Changchun's broad, birch-lined boulevards, in jeeps the Russians left behind.

We had visitors. One was Peng Sheng, a big man whose front tooth was worn into a groove from pipe smoking. After

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half an hour of civilities, Peng Sheng told us he was a political commissar. "Because of the bandits roaming the city," he added, "you are under the protective custody of the Chinese Communist Army."

"For how long?"

"For as long as there are bandits here. You must not leave this house. I have posted protective guards at the doors." There was something terrifying about Peng Sheng, though his tone was mild, even soft. His eyes were not particularly cold, but he exuded a sense of unshakable power and decision. Years later I learned that Peng Sheng had become Mayor of Communist Peking, and was responsible for the mass shootings and ruthless oppression there.

Another caller was handsome, suave Liu Chih-ming. He introduced himself as Changchun's new Mayor. Ex-Mayor, now correspondent, C. M. Chao sat up and questioned his successor with intense journalistic diligence. Liu admitted he had been Communist Mayor of Changchun all during the Russian occupation of the city.

"I have been in Changchun during the Russian occupation," remarked Chao blandly, "and I never heard of you."

Liu smiled broadly. "I could not hold office officially, of course, because of the diplomatic situation. There was a Chinese Government Mayor here and the Russians had formal meetings with him, but they worked with me." Chao translated the Communist Mayor's words for us with a perfect dead pan.

"What happened to that other Mayor who was here?" asked Weller.

"Probably dead. Or captured when we took the Central Bank Building," replied Liu. None of us dared to lift our eyes from our notebooks. But ex-Mayor Chao chatted and translated for the new mayor another fifteen minutes without betraying the slightest nervousness.

Though he was only thirty-three years old, Liu was chosen to run the first Chinese Communist city. Why?



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"He said he worked with the Russians," said Chao. "That probably means he speaks Russian and was trained in Moscow. Besides, I do not think he is a full-blooded Chinese—that is why you think he is handsome. He speaks Chinese as if he had not been in China for a long time. I believe he is from Moscow. I think the Russians brought Liu to Manchuria and put him in as mayor. The Chinese Communists had to accept him."

This hunch turned out to be right. A list of the Communist leaders of China, published in Peking, names Liu Chih-ming as a graduate of a Moscow university and carefully avoids saying where he was born. When the two top Chinese, Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai go to Moscow, Liu is always listed as going along—as a respected adviser on "urban affairs."

One afternoon a tall, spiky-haired man about forty-five years old entered our living room wearing the uniform of a full Communist general. His face bore the scars of smallpox and behind him stood a Communist soldier whose tommy gun was made in Russia. He was Chow Pao-chung, the commander of the Communist forces that won Changchun. Chow liked to talk about battles, and he described his tanks, heavy artillery, and automatic rifles as if they were beloved concubines.

"Did the Russians give you your military equipment?" asked Lieberman.

"My soldiers were armed with Japanese weapons taken away from the Japanese at the end of the war," said Chow patiently. The Russians, we knew, had accepted the surrender of the Japanese Army in Manchuria.

Chow liked to boast and he came to visit us many afternoons. He grew more confidential every time. Once he told us the story of how the Chinese Communists had "fooled Americans."

"Right after the Japanese surrender, thousands of Chinese, my Chinese soldiers, crossed the Yellow Sea in a fleet of junks. They were disguised because there were American

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warships in the Yellow Sea then, patrolling. But the Americans thought my soldiers were just fishermen and let them cross, to Antung." Chow thought this a rather good joke and we managed to smile, hoping he would tell us more.

"Then the Communist soldiers walked through the backland of Manchuria and surrounded the cities. Some of my soldiers walked a thousand miles, but that is not too much for the tireless legs of peasants." Chow liked to tell us how his men lived in caves along the way, withstood cold and hunger, yet quickly learned how to use Japanese military equipment.

"I notice the tommy gun of your guard was made in Russia," Weller said. "Where did he get that?"

Chow shrugged off the question as if it were unimportant. But Weller thought he had hit a sore spot.

"Of course the Russians gave you more than military equipment. They gave you position," Weller continued. "The Russians did not allow the Chinese Regular Army to enter Manchuria at the time they allowed your Communist soldiers to encircle every city and string out along every railway line. So, really it was the Russians who won Changchun for you, wasn't it? Your troops have not been really tested in a battle with the Chinese Regular Army."

Chow shifted his position. He had an open face and he always acted the part of a simple, boorish peasant. Now he seemed rather embarrassed. Weller rubbed the spot a little more.

"Because of the Russians, the industrial life of Manchuria is destroyed. Mukden is only a skeleton city now. There is no water because the Russians removed the generators from the Yalu dam, and without water there is much disease. Chinese, expelled by their terrified families, die in the streets because of the bubonic plague. The Russians left no coal behind, and consequently Chinese freeze in heatless rooms. Russian civilians still guard the factories of Mukden which the Russians bought from intimidated Chinese with worthless occupation

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script. After seven months of occupation, the Russians left nothing in Mukden but disease, starvation, and—

"The Russians took the machinery away only for safety," interrupted General Chow. "They will bring it back when there is peace and Communism in Manchuria and in China." We all smiled, exhibiting our disbelief. General Chow rose, reminded us we were under his protective custody, and left the house. At that time, we did not know that Chow Pao-chung had spent the last ten years training with the Russian Army in Siberia.

During another visit, Chow mentioned that he also commanded 50,000 North Korean Communists—"very good soldiers who are fighting with their Chinese brothers to help bring peace to Manchuria." We wrote down this information and the name of a North Korean Communist general called Wan Yeh, in case it would be of some future interest. Chow watched our note-taking with a broad smile. "Chinese Communists and North Korean Communists co-operate," he added. "Wan Yeh is my friend." The remark meant nothing to us at the time.

A series of minor political commissars, who all spoke English because they had been educated at American-endowed Yenching University in Peking, visited us at odd hours of the day and night. They assured us they were still Jeffersonian democrats, who had joined the Communist party "because only Communism can bring China out of chaos now." They told us how they would marry Marx and Democracy and how much better New China would be for the union. Their voices were soft, their words cajoling—the result of long training.

One night, in the midst of a long lecture, a commissar mentioned that every officer in the Chinese Communist Army has to study international affairs for an hour every day "because political alertness is our main weapon."

Weller sat up, interested. "You mean so *you* can choose the time to fight instead of your enemy?"

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"Exactly," replied the young commissar.

To keep up our morale, the Communists allowed a team of acrobats to visit us several afternoons a week. They were the Sawadas, two teen-aged boys and two pretty girls who twirled parasols on their toes, juggled bottles, and played the mandolin in a desperate and touching effort to entertain us. The four young Sawadas had all been born in Zurich to a huge Swiss mother and a tiny Japanese father. They were performing with a circus in Berlin when the war ended and the Russians marched in. Because of the Japanese father, the whole family was shipped to Siberia. The young Sawadas, wearing the cross of Swiss neutrality on their shabby clothes, performed for Soviet Army installations, moving south until they reached Changchun. The Russians enjoyed their act, but the new masters of Changchun, the Chinese Communists, were not amused. The Sawadas had no work and no money. They ate our rice and vegetables with refined intensity, enough to last until their next visit.

Victoria Sawada was a pert, pretty redhead who looked far more European than Eurasian and could chat enjoyably in German. Her sister, Ingeborg, was exotically beautiful, with shoulder-length black hair, thick, dark lashes, tilted hazel eyes, and ivory skin. Ingeborg rarely said a word.

"You must excuse Ingeborg," said her vivacious sister. "She was raped by Russians twice and she just exists now." After a week of Sawada visits, I noticed that Ingeborg kept her lovely, beseeching eyes on Weller, as if asking something of him.

"Herr Weller is self-controlled," she told me one day. "He is master of himself, *nicht wahr?*" Ingeborg had caught the reason I liked Weller, too, though he was thirty-eight and had lost a fair amount of hair. His blue eyes were usually cool, under fine, arched eyebrows. His mouth was sensitive, though, reflecting his every mood. Weller wrote novels as well as news. He spoke with a Boston accent that irritated me, but what he said had depths of meaning.

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Despite the Sawadas, our morale was not up to par. The commissars asked us if we would like to take a walk around Changchun, with protecting guards, of course. We gladly accepted. Five armed guards walked five American prisoners through Changchun's shopping area, crowded with Japanese old men, women, and children. Apparently the Japanese were told we would appear—they lined the streets and heckled us as we walked by. Some cried for joy. Some spat at us. Our Chinese Communist guards grinned with satisfaction. Later the Chinese Communists wanted us to take a walk again "for health reasons," but we refused to give them a second propaganda parade. They didn't want to drag us through the streets, so the matter was dropped.

Then Weller organized a touch football game to keep us from brooding over our future. A fur-lined Manchurian hat was rolled into an elliptical ball and tied with string. The captains, Weller and Packard, chose their teams and we went into the yard. The Communist guards came to an alert, expecting a prison break, but Mayor Chao explained that we only wanted to play an American game. All Chinese are exceedingly curious and Communists are no exception. They ordered us to proceed with the game.

On the first play, Packard blocked me and I landed flat on the ground, my face buried in slush. The guards rocked with laughter. Now they understood this game. The next time our side had the ball, Weller decided to try a forward pass and I would be receiver. Again Packard's 230 pounds blocked Ebener's 110 pounds. I somersaulted from the impact. The Communists guards cheered. They had never seen such a funny game. We played football every day, "for health reasons," and I have detested it ever since.

One day the Communists broadcast over their radio that five American correspondents were the guests of the New People's Republic of Manchuria and quoted us as approving of the Communist Government. Someone in Truce Team Headquarters heard the broadcast and notified General By-

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roade. He doubted we were "guests" and negotiated with the Communists for our release.

Our first inkling that we might be freed came with an invitation to dinner at the house of General Chow Pao-chung. There we found two other American captives, Major Robert Rigg of the U. S. Army and his pilot, Sergeant Clayton Pond. Rigg and Pond had landed in Changchun during the fighting for the city, photographed Japanese crews operating tanks for the Communists, and had a good look at Communist infiltration tactics before they were captured.

General Chow, our host, didn't mind our exchanging information with Rigg and Pond. He watched us benignly from the head of the table and only occasionally interrupted to toast Chinese-American friendship. After the chestnut soup that capped the feast, General Chow rose to his feet and toasted us, his guests. He said he hoped we had enjoyed our visit to the New People's Republic of Manchuria. We stared at him with open-mouthed astonishment. He laughed his odd, mirthless laugh and added: "An American plane is going to land here soon to take you back. Meanwhile you are free to see Changchun." Chow grinned at our babble of questions and waited for silence.

"I am in communication with Truce Team Headquarters," he said. "We are working out the details of your trip back to Peking—how the American plane should be marked, at what time it will appear over Communist territory and so forth. I must notify all my garrisons not to shoot that plane down."

We solemnly thanked General Chow for his three weeks of hospitality and walked out of his house without any protective guards.

Weller and I went for long walks in the warm Spring sunshine. We found the shelled and gutted palace of Emperor Pu-yi, the puppet ruler of Manchuria under the Japanese. A sign said it was now the "Workers' University," but Communist troops were billeted inside. Emperor Pu-yi's throne had disappeared, but the three steps leading up to it were still

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there. They were each barely two inches high, as if Pu-yi did not dare to claim too much authority. In the dining hall, old engraved invitations to the palace were scattered on the floor. One card was for a luncheon in 1742 when the Emperor and his guests ate clam soup, salad, fried lobster, fried beef, cabbage, dessert, fruits, and coffee. The main arch of the palace was called the "Gate of Welcoming Fortune." That is where the last of the Manchu emperors went out, in August 1745, a prisoner of the Russian Army. Pu-yi was taken to Siberia and has been there ever since.

Weller and I paused many times in Tatung Circle, before the monument to the Russian Air Force, a column topped by a bronze fighter plane. The Russians left huge monuments in each Manchurian city, stating that they were erected by the local people "in gratitude for their liberation." None of the monuments mentioned that the Russians fought against the Japanese only three days, after the Americans had already won the Pacific war. "That is what the Communists mean by political alertness," Weller said.

Every time we passed Changchun's Russian monument we wondered if anyone would ever dare to tear it down. "It will always be here," Weller guessed. "It will always remind the Chinese that the Russians might come back." Half a million Russians did go back to Manchuria during the Korean war, as "advisers" to the Chinese Communists fighting for them.

We walked through the dismantled homes of the Japanese middle class, homes that would be considered modern and beautiful in any American suburb. Bathtubs, door knobs, wall sockets had been hacked away. Floor and ceiling beams had been used by the Chinese to warm their rice and their thin, brown fingers. But we were sick of the signs of looting. We spent much of our time in Changchun's park, under the willow trees, near the empty pink granite swimming pool.

One May afternoon we sat on the new green grass beside an artificial lake built for Pu-yi's wives. As usual, I was doing the talking, analyzing out loud something a commissar had

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said. Weller smiled at me. "You are a peculiar girl—all politics and no poetry." It was a gentle reproach but a true one. I never forgot it.

On the day of our departure, General Chow Pao-chung himself came to call for us in a car to take us to the airfield. We shook hands with Mayor Chao, who kept his smile.

"The Communists know who I am now," Chao whispered. "But don't worry about me—remember, rural electrification is my specialty." As we drove away, I looked out the back window and saw Mayor Chao in his blue gown, flanked by two Chinese Communist political commissars, walking in the opposite direction.

The airfield was a forest of new bamboo poles which had been stuck into the thawed earth to make sure no Chinese Government planes could land. The Communists had ripped out only enough of the poles to make a narrow path for our American plane. We watched the pilot circle the field again and again, wondering if he would decide against trying to land. Suddenly the plane came straight through the poles and touched the ground. Even General Chow Pao-chung broke into an admiring smile.

As soon as we were airborne, the other correspondents hauled their typewriters onto their knees and pounded away so that their stories would be ready when we landed at Peking. I stared at the blank sheet in my machine. Across the aisle Weller was hunched in his bucket seat, his forehead creased with concentration and his eyes focused beyond me, unseeing. I typed out a message to myself: "Charlotte you are in love and he doesn't give a damn."

Weller was pulling out one completed page and inserting a fresh sheet of paper. Feeling guilty for letting down International News Service, I tore the paper from my typewriter, opened the rubber disk in the plane window behind me, and let my personal message float down on the Manchurian countryside. Then I went to work, trying to get across what it meant to have the Chinese Communists and Russians col-



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laborating in a corner of the world rich in coal and iron, perhaps a future Ruhr.

A cable was waiting for me at the Peking Hotel: I. N. S. would like to have a woman's angle. I felt a woman's story inside me again, but, as usual, not one for the newspapers.



### III

## Changing China

I. N. S. GAVE me a week's vacation to recover from my internment and then assigned me to Nanking, the postwar capital of Chiang Kai-shek. I stood on the banks of the Yangtze and watched the junks bring the "Government" from its wartime foxhole in Chungking, 2,000 river miles west. Coolies unloaded crates of rice-paper files—China's treaties and plans which now were to be "implemented." Weary bureaucrats stumbled off the Yangtze steamers and told me of the leaky boats which had been caught in swirling whirlpools and had sunk with all the women, children, and servants aboard. These were considered "routine stories," not worth more than a few lines in cable tolls.

I liked to walk through the slum of sampans, junks, and rafts along the river, watching Chinese soldiers, back from wartime hideaways, search for their families. At night the sampans were hung with dim kerosene lamps, and they were loud with quarrels, singing, snores, and the slurping of tea and noodles. The sampans were more interesting than my European-style hotel, where I lived with all Nanking's other foreigners.

The only Chinese I knew well was Nelly, a coolie woman

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with a yellow, ageless face creased with laughing wrinkles. By day she lived in the corridors of the Nanking Hotel, always immaculate in black sateen trousers and a starched white jacket. At night, Nelly walked through the city gates, showed her pass, and heard the heavy wooden door being bolted behind her. Then she headed for the sampans.

Nelly had no religion or politics, except a serene belief in *li*, the right relations between people, and the countless little ceremonies that had governed these relations for more than two thousand years. She could speak no English and I could speak no Chinese, but Nelly had served foreign ladies for thirty years and knew what to do, without instructions. Nelly was not her real name, of course. It had been given her by an English mistress of little patience who wanted her servant to have a name that was short and convenient. Nelly did not call me by my right name, either. In Chinese, Ebener sounded like *i-ping-gna*, which sounded something like old washerwoman. Nelly would not work for anybody with such an ugly name; she called me Missy *Tien-hsin*, meaning "electric letter," the Chinese word for telegram.

Of all her jobs, Nelly liked best to run my telegrams to the telegraph office, more than a mile from the hotel. As soon as I handed her a sheet, she sprinted out the door and raced the lazier coolies carrying the stories for A. P., U. P., and the *New York Times*.

Nelly thought that after she delivered my sheets of copy paper they were somehow electrified and went flying off into the sky. They flapped across the great ocean, guided by a friendly spirit, and then landed in the hands of my master sitting in the country called *Mei-kuo*, "beautiful land." Nelly loved to bring me electric letters that arrived from New York. She always stood by and watched my face as I read them. "*Bu hao*" or "*ting hao*," she muttered, after she decided whether my master had scolded me or praised me.

Usually my master scolded. Civil war had spread to all China but nobody in Nanking knew where all the battles

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were. Often the Government Army Headquarters would describe a battle in which half a million Communists had been "annihilated." Chinese Communist Headquarters in Nanking would deny any such battle had occurred and would tell of some other place, a thousand miles away, where "the people liquidated 500,000 of Chiang's armed puppets."

American planes airlifted the Chinese Government troops into one threatened area after another, but the countryside belonged to the Communists, especially at night. Warlords sprang up again. We trudged through the heat and dust of Nanking trying to find out which of Chiang's commanders actually did surrender to the Communists and which still fought. We could only relay rumors, claims, and counter-claims, and ignore the cranky telegrams from our editors demanding why we didn't report something that was supposed to have taken place 2,000 miles away, near the Gobi Desert.

The most reliable source of news about China's civil war was the American Embassy Residence. There General George Marshall, two hand-picked West Point colonels, and a dozen conscientious sergeants fitted together the radio reports from Truce Teams scattered over China. In his villa, surrounded by armed guards, flower beds, and green lawns, Marshall patiently tried to keep the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists talking about a truce.

For relaxation, General Marshall sometimes played darts with the correspondents who were always hanging around, waiting for a nugget of news. Once I hit a bull's-eye. The colonels and the other correspondents jeered, knowing I was so nearsighted I could barely see the target.

"Gentlemen," said General Marshall sternly, "the lady has scored and you will compliment her on her marksmanship." They hastily complimented me. When the General gave his press conferences, everybody rushed into the room pell-mell.

"Gentlemen," General Marshall would murmur. "You will see that the lady is seated. Then we will proceed."

This same old-fashioned Virginia courtliness was main-

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tained in Marshall's dealings with the Chinese Communists. He was a man of his word and he believed other men were also honorable and honest, if the right chord of gentlemanliness could be touched.

The chief Communist negotiator in Nanking was Chou En-lai. Chou was witty, vigorous, handsome, and he had a polish acquired in France, where he had studied for two years. He looked more Western than Chinese and his good-humored, expressive face—so unlike that of Chiang Kai-shek—was used to deceive Marshall again and again.

Chou En-lai encouraged correspondents to come and see him any time in his shabby house on an unpaved alley called "Plum Village Terrace." Visitors were always given one or two interesting, useful facts, along with an hour of propaganda. Chou had a way of rewarding his frequent visitors with American official secrets.

"Your Government is going to send General Wedemeyer to China as Ambassador soon, to replace General Marshall," Chou said one day. "You have not heard that?" His handsome face reflected polite astonishment. "Why, General Wedemeyer has written some of his friends here in Nanking that he will be here within a few weeks. The announcement of his appointment is expected any day." Chou sighed. "I am rather disappointed. This sending of military men as Ambassadors makes us Chinese think of you Americans as militarists. I do not understand why your Government does not appoint some respected scholar instead—some American who speaks Chinese and has known us for a long time."

A few weeks after these remarks, Washington announced that John Leighton Stuart, the aged former president of Yenching University, would be the new American Ambassador to China. Our Embassy in Nanking pointed out that Dr. Stuart spoke Chinese fluently and was respected by many Chinese leaders, including Communists, because he had been their teacher before the Japanese war. General Albert Wedemeyer's Nanking friends were astonished. The General was

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so sure he was to be Ambassador to China that he had already shipped some of his belongings.

Chou En-lai rode around Nanking in a sleek black Buick, the gift of a Shanghai millionaire who had already decided the Communists would win China. One day I asked if the Shanghai millionaire had insured himself against liquidation. Chou laughed. "He thinks so." I had expected Chou to deny that his car was the gift of a millionaire, but that was not his technique. "Many wealthy Chinese help the Chinese Communists with money and information," he said. "They are a fine example of the decadent class you Americans are trying to protect."

"Are you going to protect the millionaire who gave you the car?"

Chou laughed again. "We Communists will judge each case on its individual characteristics when we govern China."

The most popular of Chou's assistants was frail, gentle Kung Peng, who insisted she was not yet a member of the Communist Party because she had not yet "passed the probation period." Dressed in a blue cotton Chinese gown, Kung Peng described the Chinese Communist aims in soft, lilting English. "New China," she said, "will have no more corruption, no more political prisoners, no more disorder, no more war." Kung Peng, well-bred and a graduate of Yenching University, was the Communists' prime example of selfless devotion to the cause. She and her husband and baby lived in Chou En-lai's house where, she said, "We have only straw mats of our own." Kung Peng was known as the "Communist madonna" because, when she talked to us about the coming Utopia, she passed her bare-bottomed baby from lap to lap. Once she asked Lieberman to adopt the child, temporarily: "Because Chiang's police want to kidnap him as punishment for my allying myself with the Communists."

Kung Peng's husband was Chiao Mu, a tall, skinny Chinese who wore heavy, horn-rimmed spectacles and wrote ar-

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ticles for sophisticated liberal magazines in the United States and Europe. Kung Peng's beautiful sister, Kung Pu-sheng, also devoted herself to "progressive literary circles" but in New York instead of Nanking. Kung Pu-sheng lived on First Avenue and held down a job with the U. N. Secretariat for a while.

During the Korean war, Kung Peng's husband and her charming sister went to New York as high-ranking members of the Chinese Communist "peace delegation." Kung Peng stayed in China, where she was Chou En-lai's most trusted assistant. But Kung Peng turned up, as Chou's mouthpiece, at the Geneva conference in May 1954. Correspondents who had known her in the old days were startled to find "the Communist madonna" had changed into a hard, chain-smoking career woman with a sneer of contempt on her mouth. She didn't recognize her old friends and pretended she could speak only Chinese.

The most interesting people in China, of course, were Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang, but correspondents rarely saw them in the summer of 1946. The Chiangs, and most of the highest-ranking Chinese Government officials, were spending the summer at Kuling, on the top of a mountain, a day's trip by plane, boat, and sedan-chair from the capital.

The day I went to Kuling, a dozen coolies were struggling up the mountain trail with a piano roped to their backs. Blood trickled from the gashes where ropes cut into their flesh. They didn't seem to mind; on and on they plodded, for ten hours, never stopping, their backs bent under the weight of the piano, their eyes seeing only the ground under their feet. They were content; when they reached the top they would be paid the few pennies that would mean the difference between hunger or a stomach full of rice that night.

Kuling was once a sacred mountain, the home of philosophers, monks, and poets. Its ancient staircase led to mossy pagoda-temples, set in cedar groves. Below us, the Yangtze

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shimmered silver as it wound through terraced green rice fields. The new governmental resort town on the top of the mountain was charming, with stone villas and gardens and tree-shaded walks along a brook. Except in drawings, I had never seen the China of curving gates, flowering branches, waterfalls, and half-moon bridges placed together in conspicuous harmony.

Mrs. George Marshall asked a group of American correspondents to come to her Kuling cottage for tea, one afternoon. We were gossiping with her about Nanking, when Madame Chiang Kai-shek suddenly appeared in the open door of the living room. We were mesmerized by the beauty of Madame Chiang that afternoon. She wore a snug Chinese gown of heavy white silk crepe. On her feet were tiny spiky-heeled gold sandals, inset with colored stones.

"Oh, excuse me, please, Mrs. Marshall," said Madame in her sweet, precise English. "I didn't know you had guests."

"Come in and join us, Madame," replied Mrs. Marshall. We scrambled to our feet. Most of us had met Madame Chiang before, at official diplomatic receptions in Chungking, but she did not remember us. Mrs. Marshall made the introductions and Madame asked us to please sit down. As she took a chair at Mrs. Marshall's right, Madame modestly arranged the slit of her dress, which was revealing her magnificent legs sheathed in gossamer nylon. Seemingly unaware of our admiration, Madame Chiang busied herself cutting the cake for Mrs. Marshall. As she passed plates to us, her wrists spread the scent of jasmine.

A few months before, Eleanor Roosevelt publicly remarked that Madame Chiang spoke beautifully about democracy but did not know how to live it. We had queries from our editors then, asking for comment from Madame, but she was incommunicado at the time. This afternoon Madame seemed determined to show us that Mrs. Roosevelt was wrong in her appraisal. She asked our advice on how to lay sod in her garden and invited us to have a look at her



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Kuling home. It was not pretentious—the furniture was covered with light cotton, the curtains and rugs were simple and gay. As we walked down one of the bare halls, she tapped lightly at a closed door. Without waiting for a reply, she stepped into a room and motioned us to follow.

Chiang Kai-shek sat behind a desk piled high with papers. Madame introduced us. The Generalissimo said: "*Hao, hao,*" and smiled broadly. His head was so closely shaven he looked bald, but his ascetic face looked rested and good-humored that day.

"You are busy, my dear, we must not disturb you," said Madame in English and led us out. She had made the point that her husband was working, not just enjoying life on a mountain-top during China's civil war.

As we walked through her garden, Madame knelt at the side of a lotus pool, under a willow tree, and dropped her hand into the water. The lighting was exactly right, and the delighted A. P. photographer caught the pose. Madame Chiang withdrew her hand, now holding a bottle of Coca-Cola. Off went the flashbulb again. "This is a spring-fed pool—my refrigerator," said Madame. "Will you have a Coke with me?"

As we sat with Madame in her garden I recalled the day, four years before, when she gave a press conference in her suite at the Drake Hotel in Chicago. Then a Negro reporter rose and asked Madame if she would make a statement "for the Negro press." Madame was on the spot; any answer would infuriate Southern senators or Northern liberals, and Madame was in the U. S. to ask Congress to pass an aid bill for China.

"I don't understand," she replied, her brow a pretty puzzle. "I am talking to the American press and the Negro press is part of the American press, isn't it?" Abashed, the Negro reporter sat down and Madame was off the hook.

I remembered another day, in Chungking after the war, when she gave a party for the departing Flying Tigers and said she had made the doughnuts herself. After the party,

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Madame circled the room, and shook hands with the Flying Tigers, leaving each with a personal, memorable message. As the Flying Tigers filed out of the room, she waved. "Good-bye," she said, with a tremor in her voice. "Thank you for saving China."

Now Madame was talking to us about her war orphans in exactly the same moving words I had heard several times before. She seemed to sense my embarrassment. She rose. Hank Lieberman asked if there was anything we could do for her. Madame smiled. "I wish you could take some of this refreshing mountain air down to my poor people in Nanking." Lieberman murmured that we would give some to General Marshall, too. Madame slid him a cold glance, but she said nothing. At her scarlet garden gate, she smiled and waved and the A. P. photographer got one more perfect picture.

Back in Nanking, we learned that Changchun had been captured by Chiang Kai-shek's troops. Communist General Chow Pao-chung had withdrawn with all his soldiers without firing a shot. Why? Gradually Chiang Kai-shek's troops were sucked deeper and deeper into Manchuria, where they were annihilated piecemeal. It was the same trap MacArthur was to fall into along the Yalu, four years later.

The United States had a Military Advisory Group in China, called MAGIC, consisting of about 3,000 Americans. Many of the officers went into the field and worked their hearts out, trying to advise Chiang's generals how to fight Communists. But mostly MAGIC was a headquarters outfit, with all the boredom that accompanies a rear-echelon setup. The boredom was relieved somewhat by the Russian girls who worked in MAGIC's Nanking Headquarters and lived in the U. S. Army's requisitioned hotel, the Metropole. I saw MAGIC's Russian girls only by day, but even then they were pretty special, curled up on the sofas and beds like beautiful show cats, purring with contentment.

After the war, the Soviet Consulates in China offered to turn all White Russians into Red Russians, if they would fill

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out application blanks and pledge their loyalty to the U. S. S. R. Thousands of White Russians in Shanghai, tired of being stateless persons, without passports, unable to get out of war-torn China, took advantage of the opportunity. But nobody asked if the Metropole's girls were White, Red, or pink.

One day an American MAGIC officer told male correspondents some fascinating things about Russian girls. I was excluded from that particular press conference, but I did learn that the officer's lips were swollen and blue because his Russian friend insisted on biting whenever she kissed. The officer was fed up with the Metropole and MAGIC. He broke the spell, to the glee of correspondents who hadn't had such an interesting story for months.

When an article about the Metropole appeared in American newspapers, MAGIC acted fast and got the girls out, just before an investigator arrived from Washington to find out why MAGIC had such sloppy security. He discovered that Sonja Naroschkin, MAGIC's very pretty, blue-eyed telephone operator, was the same girl who had been interpreter for Russian General Feodor Karlov in Changchun.

Chiang Kai-shek's military commanders regarded American appreciation of Russian womanhood as a definite hazard. The Metropole girls were one reason why they accepted American military equipment but not MAGIC's advice.

The Army officer with the most curious reputation in Nanking was Major Merrill Moore of the Medical Corps. Everybody took dysentery, stomach cramps, skin rashes, infections, and migraine headaches to him. His favorite cure was putting us to bed in his tiny dispensary and listening to our troubles. Gradually the secret came out; our puttery, balding Major Moore was a well-known psychiatrist. His current job was to keep General Marshall and MAGIC healthy.

One afternoon I found Moore composing a sonnet as he stood next to a Chinese coolie on a potty.

"All Chinese working for Americans have to have their

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stools tested," Moore explained. "But any Chinese who thinks he might have a disease and therefore lose his job brings me the excrement of someone else, preferably that of a healthy baby." He sighed. "So now I have to put the servants on the potty myself, to see that they produce their own personal excrement." He turned back to his sonnet and scribbled a moment.

*The world is the rat's inheritance  
Being little and quick and easy and free to come  
And early to go and strong to multiply  
No matter whether men or mountains go by—*

"Not done yet," explained Major Moore. "Rats are very much on my mind right now. I have hired a corps to exterminate Nanking's rats. They are killing them at the admirable rate of 1,500 a day. However, I have just learned that their carcasses are being served in Nanking's restaurants as rabbit stew and their pelts have started a new fad for fur hats."

"Do you write many sonnets, Doctor Moore?"

His blue eyes peered at me. "Don't you know I have written nearly one hundred thousand sonnets, more than all the English poets put together? Some of my sonnets are pretty good—published—and admired by literary critics." He leaned over and whispered in my ear.

"Do not tell anyone in MAGIC about my sonnets. They think I am peculiar enough. MAGIC is sore as hell at me because I put everybody on a water buffalo diet. I have explained to MAGIC that there is a high count of erysipelas in Chinese pigs, but they say they hate water buffalo. Nevertheless, they will eat water buffalo as long as I am the doctor around here."

Ordinary Chinese in Nanking did not appreciate Moore either, because he periodically sprayed DDT from a plane. The citizens saw mosquitoes and flies curl up and lie and thought they might suffer the same disastrous effects. They

### *III. Changing China*

bicycled around Nanking with handkerchiefs tied over their noses, bandit-style, and cursed the American "germ warfare."

One day Moore was dressed in white leggings, brassard, and helmet and accompanied by four G.I.'s dressed in similar costume. "I'm going out to purify the tomb of Sun Yat-sen," Moore explained. "The Chinese Government asked me to. The presence of the Japanese here for a decade contaminated the tomb of the father of the Chinese Republic." Moore and his assistants sprayed DDT over Sun Yat-sen's tomb with all the solemnity of an archbishop consecrating a church.

Foreign correspondents are usually a querulous, unhappy lot when they don't have a front-page story, and China's seesawing civil war battles rarely got more than a few paragraphs buried in the back pages. We always looked forward to General Marshall's press conferences, though they were usually off-the-record and the General confirmed things we had already heard from other sources. But there was always the hope that Marshall would have something to announce, something that would put our by-lines on the front pages again. One sweltering summer day we were summoned to Marshall's house and shown to the pale silk-damask chairs in the living room. The doors were closed and no servants passed iced tea or Cokes as they usually did. Something was up. We waited for the General to appear, observing the tension in the faces of his aides. At precisely four o'clock, Marshall strode in, wearing a uniform, his five stars polished. He was erect, very formal, unusually austere.

"I have a statement to give you today," he began. We fumbled for our pencils. Marshall waited until he had full attention again.

"The American Marines stationed in Tientsin, Tsingtao, and Peking are going to be withdrawn and sent home."

"Why, General?"

"They have finished repatriating the Japanese from North

### *No Facilities for Women*

China and they held the railways which enabled Chiang Kai-shek's Armies to enter Southern Manchuria. Their postwar job in China is done."

Weller, who was nearly fanatical on the subject of maintaining American bases abroad and had written an unpopular book expounding this conviction, sharply questioned General Marshall as to whether he believed the withdrawal of the American Marines was wise policy at this stage in the civil war.

General Marshall replied that he was in China on a diplomatic rather than a military assignment. He was repeating orders from Washington and in his present job as true negotiator he could not comment on them.

Weller pointed out that the Russians were still in Port Arthur and Dairen and had not lived up to the treaty obliging them to share those ports with Chiang Kai-shek. The General's face looked tired and lined. He did not answer. We remembered that the lights in his house had been burning until two and three in the morning for a week. The General told us he had nothing more to say.

Almost all of us wrote speculation, believing the withdrawal of the Marines from North China was a trade. We guessed, from hints dropped at Communist Headquarters, that Chou En-lai had promised Marshall that if the marines were evacuated from China, the Communists would agree to a permanent truce and mold the Communist Armies into Chiang Kai-shek's Army. We never knew if we were right or not, because subsequent truces didn't last more than two weeks.

Nanking's playground is "Lotus Lake," just outside the old city walls. The shore is dotted with ancient pagodas and mossy stone lions and turtles. One day Weller and I hired a sampan and floated through beds of pink lotus blossoms.

"To the Buddhists, the lotus is a symbol of the way man can rise from slime and mud to a blossom of spiritual

### *III. Changing China*

beauty," I said, hoping Weller would notice how poetical I was getting.

"Have you ever read the treaty of Yalta?" he demanded.

"No, but I know that's where Roosevelt agreed the Russians could occupy Manchuria and Port Arthur, and North Korea, too, I guess. Let's not talk about it."

"Nobody wants to talk about it. Not even Marshall; not even Congress. Why is it Americans will not admit we took a suicidal diplomatic defeat there—and see to it no American president will ever make a treaty without their knowledge and consent again?"

"When I think of Americans, I think of my mother and sisters and brother in Milwaukee. I doubt if they know how disastrous Yalta was."

"They don't want to know. Apparently I've been harping on it too much—I'm being transferred to London."

"When?"

"In a few days. I hope to God I won't have to come back here for World War III. Well, you stay in the Pacific and you'll get to be a famous lady war correspondent. That's what you want, isn't it?"

"No."

Weller avoided my eyes. "I've been married before," he said gently. "I am not going to marry again." We poled our sampan back to shore, through the lotus beds, and stepped back into the press-hostel world of rumors, telegrams, and chattering typewriters.

As civil war engulfed all China, our Truce Teams folded, admitting that only the Americans wanted an armistice. Chiang Kai-shek was sure he could win and the Communists were just as sure they could. American money, negotiations, or arms could no longer stop China's civil war. Marshall's mission had failed; he admitted it, and flew back to Washington to become Secretary of State.

Because of the inflation, I could no longer live on my \$75-

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a-week salary from I. N. S. I earned another fifty dollars a week by writing for *Newsweek*, too. But although I worked almost all the time, I never saw my stories in print, because nobody bothered to send me clippings. I suddenly decided to fill my lonely, unsatisfactory life with new adventures, new sightseeing, and new stories. I thought I'd have a try at breaking into the Russian-occupied zone of Korea, north of the thirty-eighth parallel. *Newsweek* said it would like some stories from Korea, on a free-lance basis.

When Nelly learned I was flying to Tokyo and Seoul, she brought me a scroll of ivory silk, with beautifully brushed Chinese characters. The quotation, from a Chinese sage who lost his beloved poetess-wife, read: "Beautiful women who write do not live long." Nelly laughed with me and readily agreed I was not beautiful, hence the philosopher's words did not apply to me. As we said good-bye, Nelly contemplated the tips of her black cloth slippers, and then asked the United Press interpreter to translate her farewell words. "A woman must have a master; otherwise she will not find happiness, no matter where she looks."





## IV

# The Thirty-eighth Parallel

ONE afternoon in November 1746 Syngman Rhee sat in the stuffy parlor of his house in Seoul wearing the traditional costume for Korean gentlemen—a silk kimono with a big bow over the chest, very full silk pajamas tied neatly at the ankles, and tiny ballet slippers. He looked older than his seventy-three years. His skin was creamy wax and his eyes were so narrow he seemed to be asleep. It was difficult to realize that I was looking at the “strong man of South Korea.” In a hoarse whisper, Rhee was telling a group of foreign correspondents how he happened to be the leader, south of the thirty-eighth parallel.

“I understand Americans . . . I have a master’s degree from Harvard and a doctorate from Princeton,” he said. “When the Japanese annexed Korea, in 1710, I defied them, so I had to flee my native land.” For thirty-five years he lived as a political exile in Honolulu and Washington. After V-J Day, the American Army flew him to Seoul. Rhee wanted a South Korea without any Communists in it and so did our Army. They came to terms.

Immediately after telling us his qualifications for leadership, Rhee started criticizing the American military com-

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mander in South Korea, then Lieutenant General John R. Hodge. Imagine the Russians picking a Korean leader who criticized the Red Army commander, I thought. Was this critical old man a proof of our strength as democrats or of our weakness as bosses? I could not make up my mind. With an effort, I tried to pay attention to Rhee's accented English.

"When General Hodge landed here a year ago, a Japanese General saw him and told him to stay away from the terrible Koreans. It is too bad that Hodge got his information about Korea from a Japanese General. Hodge has said that Koreans and Japanese are the same breed of cats."

At this point, Mrs. Rhee walked in, carrying a tray with a silver wine pot and tiny porcelain cups. She was a chic, slim Viennese in her late forties with silver-gray hair and a pert, lively face. She told us amusing stories about her servant problems, but I gathered she didn't care much for Koreans. "I am adjusting myself to Oriental customs," she smiled, sipping a Korean white wine that scorched her throat and brought tears to her eyes. She grimaced a bit as she swallowed the stuff. Mrs. Rhee had never seen Korea until a year before, when the American Army plane airlifted her from Washington to Seoul's airport. I wondered how the Koreans liked having a first lady without a drop of Oriental blood:

Without mincing words, Syngman Rhee went on to say that he didn't think much of American diplomats or of President Truman, either.

"In 1903, Russia proposed to Japan a division of Korea at the Thirty-eighth Parallel. Didn't the Americans remember that, when they agreed in Moscow, forty-two years later, to let the Russians occupy the northern half of our country? We Koreans were not consulted. We don't want Russian and American armies here, dividing our country into two parts. We don't see why we should be bound by stupid American decisions or—"

Mrs. Rhee interrupted the tirade by plumping the silk embroidered sofa cushions. Perhaps she realized more than her

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husband that he would not be boss of South Korea if the Americans had not defeated Japan and liberated the southern half of the country.

The conversation turned to the half-million refugees from North Korea who had fled the Russian Occupation Army and were now living in South Korea.

"Most of the refugees from North Korea are Communist agents," Rhee muttered. No, he did not think they could be indoctrinated. "They have to be rooted out."

I remembered the pockmarked general in Manchuria and his boast that 50,000 indoctrinated, trained Korean refugees were fighting with him for Communism. If Communists could make fighters out of Korean refugees, why couldn't we? There was no time to ask the question because Rhee was expecting a visit from one of his women's political societies that day. I supposed that was why he was wearing Korean dress. After thirty-five years abroad, Rhee observed few Korean customs and almost always wore American business suits.

As soon as we were out of Rhee's house, I asked the other correspondents whom the Russians had picked for strong man of North Korea.

"General Kim Il Sung, a thirty-five-year-old guerrilla leader who fought the Japanese in Manchuria. He's a Korean hero, but some people say the real Kim Il Sung is dead and the present one is just a Russian stooge using his name."

One afternoon, Mark Gayn of the *Chicago Sun*, an interpreter, and I went down to the tenements of Seoul to look for a Korean labor leader we had met in the company of an American colonel a few days before. The women walking the streets with clay pots and bundles on their heads passed us with their eyelids lowered, never giving us a glance.

"There is no fraternization between Korean women and Americans, because the Korean men won't stand for it," said our interpreter. "I have seen Korean women forcibly dragged away from Americans offering them chocolate and gum." I

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glanced again at the women, very neat in white ankle-length skirts, white boleros, and shod in slim black rubbers with turned-up toes. They were not pretty and their lardy faces were expressionless. I decided Koreans were the most solemn Orientals in the world and not particularly likable.

The interpreter led us up to the top of a four-story office building, to a small, grimy room furnished with a cracked table and a few rickety chairs. The labor leader, Moon, sat there wearing a frayed black suit. He gave us no greeting but simply stared at us with sullen, hostile eyes. We asked why he had been conferring with Colonel Shaw, the head of American Military Government's labor division.

"My labor federation clashed with Rhee's," he replied in a flat, sulky tone. "Rhee is driving my labor federation underground by arresting all the officers and keeping them in jail without trial. But the Colonel wants to have unity among South Korean laborers so he confers with me." Moon told us he had been beaten up by one of Rhee's labor gangs and had to spend five weeks in a hospital recovering from his injuries.

I was dismissing all this as anti-Rhee propaganda, when the door of the room was kicked off its hinges and a young Korean in civilian clothes entered, aiming a pistol at us. He walked over to Moon and placed him under arrest.

Through our interpreter, Gayn asked the Korean for his credentials. He took out a card showing he was Sgt. Kim Ho of the Korean National Police. He had "forgotten" the warrant for arrest but he assured us Moon was being arrested on orders of General Hodge himself, for leading a railway strike two weeks before. Moon had just told us he was in the hospital at that time. We decided to find out which one was lying.

Gayn wanted to stay with Moon to see what happened next. He asked me to telephone General Hodge and ask him if he actually had ordered Moon's arrest. I asked Foster Hailey, an editorial writer for the *New York Times*, to do that job; generals were always glad to talk to Hailey. Hodge

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told Hailey he had no idea who Moon was and certainly had not ordered his arrest. Then we telephoned Colonel Shaw. The Colonel was exasperated.

"Moon is not responsible for the railway strike. He was in the hospital then. Before that he was in jail and I had to get him out." The Colonel sighed. "Well, I guess I better go down and bail him out again."

At the Central Police Station we found Moon, Gayn, the Korean chief of police, and an American major, having an argument. Gayn was insisting he saw teen-aged thugs raiding Moon's Headquarters at the time Moon was led out, and those kids had been belting Koreans around.

Major E. E. Richardson smoothly replied that Gayn made a mistake; no youngsters helped Korean police make arrests.

Gayn lost his temper. "I bet I can find some of those young thugs right here in this Central Police Station," Gayn shouted, and rushed downstairs, all of us after him. Gayn caught a boy by the collar. "Ask him if he's a cop."

The boy said he was a member of the "Great Korea Association" and was assigned to duty at this station. In another room we found about thirty other boys, all members of the "Great Korea Association," one of Rhee's youth organizations. The boys readily admitted they had "helped" arrest labor-leader Moon.

Richardson, only slightly embarrassed, then explained the "Great Korea Association." "In some troubled areas, the police are shorthanded. Consequently Military Government gave them authority to recruit sons of well-known shopkeepers to keep order and act as a stabilizing influence."

"What troubled areas, Major?" Gayn asked.

"Well, for instance, there's trouble at Kaesong, along the Thirty-eighth Parallel right now," Richardson replied. "This morning bands of armed Koreans raided ten police boxes and killed a Korean policeman and a Korean detective."

Gayn and I left for the Thirty-eighth Parallel two days later. As we bounced over Korean ox-cart tracks, I noticed

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the G.I. driver of our jeep kept his carbine close beside him and checked it once in a while. The two American officers with us wore automatics in their shoulder holsters. It didn't look as if the Koreans were loyal, liberated allies. In Japan, American troops did not need to carry guns, yet Japan was the enemy. I had seen unarmed G.I.'s vacationing in Japanese mountain resorts far from any American base. None of them worried that the former enemy might attack them; they considered the idea preposterous. What was wrong in South Korea, that our troops had to carry guns all the time, even in the streets of Seoul, more than a year after the war ended and we had shipped the Japanese back to their home islands?

Near Mungson we stopped at a U. S. Army camp guarding a valley with field guns. We were now only forty miles from North Korea, and the G.I.'s and officers could talk about nothing but the coming war. "I'm not bringing my wife to Korea," a lieutenant said. "I don't want her caught out here."

A war in Korea would not take us by surprise, I thought, and wrote a note about our preparedness. The spotless camp had refrigerators stacked with stateside meat and the clean-shaven G.I.'s bore evidence of a commanding officer who insisted on discipline and soldierliness.

The Korean police near Mungson were also on the alert. They had laid roadblocks across the ox-cart routes. We watched them frisking travelers. One of our officers told us how thorough the Korean police were.

"The other day the cops caught some gook with 40,000 yen on him and asked him where he got it. He said he sold his property and was bound for Seoul. Then they made him kneel and asked him questions. Every time he opened his mouth to answer, they kicked him in the groin. They beat hell out of him before they got him to admit he was a Communist." I wondered if the resentment flaring up against the police in the "troubled areas" was due to their methods of obtaining confessions.

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Kaesong, despite its riot a few days before, was quiet the afternoon our jeep rolled in, an eerie quiet. Only children appeared on the streets. An ancient, mossy tower was encircled with new barbed wire, probably so no sniper could make it his hideout.

We sped along our side of the Thirty-eighth Parallel, well patrolled by armed American officers and G.I.'s in jeeps. After dark we halted at Pakchon, where the commanding officer turned out to be a fellow alumnus and gallantly gave me his room.

Conversation in the Pakchon messhall centered around the American convoy leaving for North Korea the next morning. Every Wednesday, at precisely ten A.M., an American convoy crossed into the Russian zone in order to bring supplies to the Ongjin Peninsula, which was part of South Korea, but could be supplied by land only by traversing twenty-three miles of rutted road in North Korea. The officers at Pakchon welcomed "convoy day." The ride through North Korea relieved the monotony of their post and occasionally provided an interesting game of wits. According to the Russian rules, our convoys had to travel at a steady twenty-five miles an hour and return the same way the same day. No deviations from the prescribed route were permitted. A Russian truck always followed our convoys to make sure we didn't stop or wander off the road.

The Thirty-eighth Parallel was marked by a wooden pole stretched across the road. The G.I. standing on the south side of the bar was polished from boots to rifle butt and looked as if he had just passed an inspection. The armed Russian on the other side of the bar wore only a thin, frayed shirt, although the November air was biting cold. His trousers were patched with cloth of different colors, but his tommy gun looked new and well cared for.

At five minutes to ten a former American lend-lease truck, repainted with the star of the Red Army, arrived at the Russian side of the border. Soviet officers, their medals clinking

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as they jumped off the truck, consulted their watches, saluted, and made a few remarks in Russian. I looked at Gayn who had been born in Harbin and spoke Russian perfectly. He pretended he did not understand; Gayn did not want the Soviet Army to know there was a White Russian traveling in an American convoy. At exactly ten o'clock the bar was lifted and we crossed into North Korea. The Russian officers jumped back into their truck to follow us for the rest of the trip. I asked Gayn what he had overheard.

"The Russians said America is a country with many races and nationalities," Gayn replied, laughing at my own slant eyes. "They also noted there are many new faces in the convoy today."

We pounded out our steady twenty-five miles an hour, past an airfield with Russian fighters parked alongside American lend-lease transport planes. All the planes now wore prominent Soviet Air Force markings. On the airport's guardhouse Russian letters two feet high warned: "Soldiers, keep your secrets. The enemy is watchful." A group of Red Army officers, men, wives, and children smiled at us as we went by.

The gate to Kaijo was decorated with enormous pictures of Stalin and his Korean puppet, General Kim Il Sung. The General had a Mussolini jaw and the stolid, square face of a peasant. I wondered if Kim could make arrests of North Koreans in the name of the Russian commander, without the Russian commander being aware of it.

The large buildings in Kaijo were decorated with pictures of Red Army generals. Then I spied something different—huge colored posters showing Korean farmers stamping down snakes. The snakes wore top hats and looked a great deal like Uncle Sam. We could not stop to inspect the posters more closely because the Russian truck in our rear was hurrying us out of Kaijo.

One of the officers with us remarked that our trip would be uneventful. The Wednesday before, one of our jeeps made a



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wrong turn and the Russians in the escort truck fired a warning shot overhead. The driver hastily corrected his mistake and was not apt to make it again.

As we crossed back into South Korea, on the road leading to Ongjin, Gayn translated the banner floating from a barracks: "Let's not allow the arsonists of a new war to disrupt the peace we have won. Let's maintain our new peace."

The famous Private Peevey lived in Ongjin for a while. Peevey was the only enlisted man in the U. S. Army to have made a treaty with the Russians. Private Peevey had been placed in charge of 70,000 acres of rice paddy on our side of the Thirty-eighth Parallel. But the water reservoir for the rice was on the Russian side. Private Peevey, without the knowledge of American Military Government, made a deal with the Russians agreeing that he would give them 10,000 bags of rice at harvest time if they would open the sluices and give him the water from the reservoir. When our Military Government heard of Private Peevey's treaty with the Russians, it exploded with consternation.

"Don't worry none," replied Private Peevey in his Southern drawl. "I got mah water, but I never did aim to give them Russkies no rice." A week after Private Peevey left Ongjin for Dixie, armed North Korean police crossed the Thirty-eighth Parallel in trucks and raided Private Peevey's rice storehouse. South Koreans tried to prevent the raid and four of them were killed.

As we sat outside Ongjin's messhall after lunch, we heard a plane, so high we could not see it. A sergeant jumped up and ran to a near-by field telephone to send a message. "Must be the Russkies," he said. Our soldiers were constantly on the alert for the Russians, but they never thought they might have to fight Russian-trained North Koreans instead.

At the designated time, our convoy crossed back into North Korea. The Russian truck in our rear forced us to a faster pace, apparently to make sure we wouldn't be in their zone after the early autumn sunset. As we bounced through

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deserted rice fields and villages scarlet with drying peppers, I looked for signs of Russian troops, but no one was in sight. I wanted to know if the Russians had as much trouble in their zone as we had in ours. But I dismissed the idea of getting myself captured north of the Thirty-eighth Parallel. I had to admit I had lost my nerve. In Korea, the Americans and Russians had put aside the fiction that they were allies. Once more we sped by the banner warning that "the enemy is watchful." Nobody had any doubt whom the Russians considered the enemy.

The Americans on our side of the border were security-conscious to an astonishing degree. Though Kaesong and Pakchon had such serious riots that U. S. troops and tanks had to suppress them, the soldiers and officers would say nothing at all about what had happened.

In American Military Government Headquarters in Seoul, however, we could read the official reports coming in from all over South Korea. The reports mentioned the number of Korean dead and wounded, the number of arrests (in the thousands) and that U. S. tanks were "engaged in a show of force in the villages." But the reports did not say what the riots were about or how they started.

We picked out a village, Waya, mentioned in the riot reports, and visited it. Waya looked prosperous enough, with terraced rice fields watered by streams from the surrounding mountains. But the farmers would not talk to us. They looked at our uniformed Military Government interpreter with wary eyes and insisted they knew nothing. Land records in Waya village stated that most of the sharecroppers worked only a third of an acre for a landlord named Oh, who owned 7,500 acres of land in South Korea.

The reception room of Oh's house was lined with Japanese-style screens and had a beautiful floor of fine, oiled parchment. There were no furnishings, except for a few carved wooden boxes, inlaid with mother-of-pearl. I had heard that Korean landlords, including Oh, entertained Mili-

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tary Government officials with dozens of pretty *kiisan* girls, the Korean equivalent of geishas. I listened for the sound of *kiisan* laughter or the strumming of a mandolin. There was only the barking of a dog. Then one of the screens slid aside and Oh stepped into the room, wearing a kimono of ivory silk. He looked exactly like the American idea of Fu Manchu, complete to drooping mustache. Despite his seventy years, he sank to a cross-legged position on the floor in a single, graceful movement.

"Why were there riots in Waya?" Gayn asked, after the usual polite preliminaries.

"I know nothing about them," replied Oh. He passed us thin, translucent porcelain plates of fruit and parried our questions with Oriental skill. Suddenly he leaned forward. "I am selling my land, bit by bit, when the price is right," he confided.

"Why?"

"I am so poor these days that I have to turn beggars from my door." We could not keep our eyes off his exquisite sterling-silver fruit knives. "I have a big household," Oh added. The *kiisan* girls stayed out of sight.

Gayn was still determined to talk to some farmers and learn the cause of the rioting. He did not believe Military Government's explanation that the unrest was due only to "outside agitators from north of the Thirty-eighth." By now I knew that Military Government suspected Russian-born Gayn, a naturalized U. S. citizen, was a Communist, interested only in "getting the dirt" about the American occupation of South Korea. I knew from his conversation that Gayn was decidedly leftist, but I admired the way he, unlike the other correspondents in Korea, persisted in getting at the causes of the riots instead of accepting official explanations without question. When Gayn suggested our taking a trip to rioting Taegu, I gladly agreed. Gayn's wife, Sally, was a friend of mine and I could travel with her husband without causing gossip. Weller sent me a postcard from Europe now

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and then and I did not want him to hear, via the correspondents' grapevine, that I was misbehaving. Yet I needed intelligent company. I never suspected I would be labeled "Communist" by the Army just because I was on the same planes, trains, and jeeps with Gayn.

The Army picked out a "typical Korean village," Yenho, which had no riot, and gave us an interpreter and an armed American public relations officer for our visit. We stopped before a windowless hut of baked earth with a thatched roof, where a ragged Korean sat on his front step, eating an apple. We entered the dusty yard, bowing, and told our host we would like to talk about crops.

"We are ignorant people, unable to read or write," answered the Korean. "We cannot tell you things." More than 80 per cent of the Korean peasants are illiterate, so we considered him typical enough.

"We are ignorant of farming and land," said Gayn, "but you have knowledge of that. Each man is wise in some things."

The Korean smiled at our attempt to match Oriental humility and politeness. He sent his scrawny children to the neighbors. We would have a meeting, he said. Soon the yard was full of Korean men, staring at us. None of them had ever talked to Americans before. We were told sixty of Yenho's seventy families were sharecroppers, who rented just over an acre each.

"And how much land do you need to grow enough to feed one mouth?" asked Gayn.

The farmers argued among themselves a few minutes. "Half an acre, at least. The soil here is poor," said our host.

"How many mouths are there in each family?"

Most of the farmers in the yard had four or five children. None had less than three. I looked at the children and their distended bellies and rickety legs.

"Yes, they are always hungry," said a farmer, catching my look.

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Most of the farmers in Yenho had the same landlord, a man named Soh, to whom they paid half their crop. When this remark was translated by the interpreter, our American public relations officer protested.

"There is an American Military Government law stating you need pay your landlord only one third of your crop," he said.

The farmers looked confused and babbled among themselves. Finally one of them spoke to us. "But Soh demands one half and consequently we must pay him one half our crop." The farmers took a census—all of them paid one half. They knew no farmer who paid the one third maximum laid down by an American Military Government directive.

The public relations officer was indignant. "The directive states you pay only a third. It has been sent to all local officials," he insisted.

"To the officials, perhaps," replied a farmer gently. "But we cannot read. Our landlord is the only one around here who can read." The landlord, we discovered, had a job with Military Government.

"Are there agitators around here from North Korea?" I asked.

The farmers seemed honestly confused again. "There were some people who asked us to join a union to force the landlords to give us some land. They were all arrested. They are in jail," one of them said.

"Were they from North Korea?"

"We do not know where they came from. They talked as we do. They knew the soil here," answered one of the Koreans.

Gayn asked if the farmers would like to buy their land, if Military Government gave them credit and cut the price. The farmers considered this a joke. Land prices averaged \$1,600 an acre around Yenho, more than any of the farmers could save in a lifetime.

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"No matter how low the price, we could never buy land," said our host.

These farmers admitted that they had heard of the riots in their neighboring county, and they had seen the American tanks going down the road, on their way to quell the disturbances. Then the farmers lapsed into silence. I thought I detected a stir of resentment, a substream we could not reach. We tried a few more questions but the meeting in Yenho was over. The farmers indicated we were no longer welcome.

I asked the public relations officer why, only fifteen miles outside of Taegu, an American-occupied town quartering thousands of U. S. troops, landlords could get away with subverting Military Government's orders.

The public relations officer flushed. "Goddammit, we can't speak Korean! We've got to have Koreans in Military Government, and the only people who know English are the landlords. What the hell can we do about it?"

I thought the obvious answer was to learn Korean, but then I realized I had found it virtually impossible to learn an Oriental language myself. Still, it seemed to me that if we were prepared to create rulers in Asia, we ought to be prepared with its tongues.

Like ourselves, the Japanese used the Koreans who had an education. They were hated by the farmers not only for their wealth, greed, and corruption, but also because they were considered traitors. A Korean by the name of Yu Uk was a good example. During the war, he made recruiting speeches for the Japanese, urging Korean youngsters "to fight for the Japanese fatherland." Yu now made it his business to know English and collaborate with Korea's new Army of Occupation. His job was head of the Department of Education for American Military Government.

The defeated Japanese owned vast estates in South Korea and it seemed to me we could distribute those lands, at least, without infuriating the Korean landlords who were working for us in Military Government. The highest-ranking State

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Department official in South Korea, Dr. Arthur Bunce, did prepare a land-reform bill for the distribution of the Japanese estates, but it was not put into effect.

Bunce was a graying man with gentle manners who had worked in Korea before the Pacific war as a Y. M. C. A. administrator, and he knew the language and its people. But he was considered something of an eccentric by our Army. Bunce had the idea we had to fight Communism in South Korea by social reform, and that arresting "agitators" increased the underground hostility. The Army officers in Military Government, however, disagreed. They thought social reform imitated Communists. We could not admit that the "agitators" had a point. Therefore any social reform was dangerous. One Army officer told me Bunce was "a meddlesome fool."

Military Government decided the Japanese-owned land would be held in escrow, awaiting distribution by a provisional government of South Korea. We ran off an election for that provisional government. To nobody's surprise, Syngman Rhee's supporters won forty-three out of the forty-five elected seats. The only two non-Rhee men were elected by Changji-do, an island off the Korean coast.

A friendly G.I. bumped into me in the corridors of Military Government Headquarters after the election results were announced. "Hey, miss, you know why Changji-do voted leftist?" he asked. "The women voted there! They can't do that because the election law states only headmen are allowed to vote." I asked him to tell me more about Changji-do.

"It's an Amazon island. The women are pearl divers and support their husbands, so they think they are the headmen. Two of my buddies are stationed on Changji-do, and they tell me those pearl-diving dames make Jane Russell look like a piker." Delighted with a woman's angle, at last, I asked the Army's public relations division for permission to visit Changji-do.

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"No," said the Major. "There are no facilities for women there."

"On an Amazon island?"

The public relations officer cleaned his fingernails and avoided my stare. "Sorry, orders. You cannot go to Changji-do and that's all there is to it." I'm afraid I got pretty insistent. The Army suddenly announced my accreditation to South Korea had "expired" and I had to go back to Tokyo immediately. But Military Government's health division said I couldn't go until I took five different injections, including one for "Japanese Bee" which paralyzed my right leg for a day. While public relations and the health division argued whether a discredited female had to wait a week to determine the outcome of the injections, I hobbled around on my left leg, looking for an unauthorized way to get to Changji-do. My G.I. friend told me to go out to the airfield where U. S. planes were airlifting platoons of Korean police to Changji-do.

"My buddies on Changji-do say those Amazons advanced on 'em one morning naked to the waist—with their pearl-diving knives in their teeth and sore as hell. My buddies barricaded themselves in and radioed Seoul for help. Now the Korean police are going to Changji-do to deal with those rioting dames in their own sweet way."

"Why are the Amazons sore at Americans'?"

"Because Military Government won't seat those two pinkos the women elected to the provisional government, I guess. Who knows?"

I went out to the airfield and saw black-uniformed Korean police, armed with carbines, climbing into the bellies of American planes. Their destination was "classified."

I did not get to Changji-do, and getting captured by Amazons on an island that has no facilities for women has remained an unfulfilled ambition.

Before hustling me out of Korea, the Army agreed I could meet General Lee Bum Suk, who was being groomed as suc-



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cessor to Syngman Rhee because Rhee was already far beyond the life expectancy of the average Korean. General Lee was only forty-five years old, straight and tall, with a thoroughly military appearance and a crew haircut. He was given his rank by Chiang Kai-shek, who made him a commander of Korean troops during the war against the Japanese. Now General Lee was head of an organization called Korean National Youth Inc., which was building up a private anti-Communist army, loyal to General Lee, with our blessing, our money, our military advisers, and our barracks. In 1953, General Lee toured the United States.

My last night in Korea, Syngman Rhee invited me to dinner. The other guests were Gayn, a Military Government colonel and his girl friend, and a Korean in a European suit named Kim Sung Soo, a banker who was supposed to be the fourth richest man in Korea and the brains behind Rhee's political conservatism. We dined on cold rice and tongue-burning *kimchee* sauce, cold vegetables, and warm white wine. Rhee was affable but he had little to say, leaving the conversation to the banker. Mrs. Rhee deferred to the banker and flattered him, possibly because he had donated the villa the Rhees were living in.

Kim Sung Soo had a round, smooth face, nice manners, and an excellent command of English. Toward the end of the evening he mentioned, very casually, that land reform was "impractical" in Korea. The American colonel instantly agreed that land reform was "impractical" in Korea. Mrs. Rhee beamed. The evening had been a success.

Within a year, the banker, Kim Sung Soo, was dead—assassinated by one of Rhee's gangs because he was considered a rival for Rhee's power. South Korea saw increasing riots and rebellion even in its Army. American officers I met were outraged at the way Rhee wrecked the South Korean Army we had built up with so much effort and cost. We thought we had an excellent group of trained Korean officers, but Rhee considered them untrustworthy and buried them in

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minor posts. In their place he put political favorites and sons of rich landowners, aiming at keeping the Army personally loyal to him. Rhee increased his power further by using the Japanese land we held in escrow as his political pork barrel, dividing it among a few of his most trusted supporters.

Sure that South Korea was weak and North Korea strong, the Russians withdrew their Army north of the Thirty-eighth Parallel. The new "People's Republic of North Korea" demanded American withdrawal too. We handed the Korean problem to the United Nations and pulled out American troops six months later. The U. N. sponsored a new election in South Korea. Rhee, despite his ruthless suppression of anyone who disagreed with him, lost a majority of the votes in the legislature. But only a week later, the North Koreans were pouring over the Thirty-eighth, and everybody conveniently forgot that Rhee was no longer the legal President of South Korea.

When General MacArthur landed in Korea as commander-in-chief of our troops, he publicly embraced Rhee. Communist papers all over Europe and Asia gleefully printed the picture again and again. The official photograph of MacArthur with his arms around the aged politician, whom the South Koreans had rejected as President in an honest election, was considered the best possible propaganda for keeping Europe and the rest of Asia "neutral" during the Korean war.

After the Korean war ended, Communist papers used another picture of Rhee—being hugged by American Army officers on the day of our hard-won armistice in July 1953.



## V

# The Foreign Legion

FROM the time I was fourteen years old, reading Richard Halliburton's books, I wanted to visit the ruins of Angkor Wat. It always seemed a rather impractical idea, inasmuch as Angkor Wat is hidden away in the jungles of Cambodia. But one day I picked up an English-language newspaper in Tokyo's press hostel and discovered there were anti-French guerrillas fighting around Pnom-Penh, the capital of Cambodia. I asked Gordon Walker of the *Christian Science Monitor*, who had been to Indochina, how a person could get to Pnom-Penh, by dragonback or what.

"There's a plane three times a week from Hong Kong to Saigon and a plane twice a week from Saigon to Pnom-Penh," Walker replied. "Go. Indochina will pay off. There are no American correspondents there at all now. And the story is damn important." I flew off to Pnom-Penh, via Hong Kong and Saigon, in December 1946.

The young King of Cambodia has a palace of gilded pagodas, open to visitors, though the floor of the royal treasury is paved with blocks of solid silver. At sundown, when there was a breeze, I liked to sit beside one of the King's pagodas

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and listen to the bells attached to the eaves tinkling in harmony. One evening a white-skinned man in neat jodhpurs and polished riding boots came up to me and introduced himself as an Australian jockey, in charge of His Majesty's stables. King Norodom Sihanouk, he said, was a plucky, bouncy little man determined to be a modern king and an excellent horseman. I said I would like to meet him.

"H. M. is away now, studying at the Samaur School of Cavalry in France," replied the jockey. "But don't think the King of Cambodia is going to be just a French stooge," he added. "H. M. is only twenty-five now. Give him time."

The jockey showed me the King's riding track and jumps and assured me that His Majesty practiced every day. "But horsemanship isn't all he's learning." I asked about King Norodom Sihanouk's incredible palace. The jockey laughed and waved toward the pagodas, the banquet pavilion, the tinkling bells. "All built by the French," he said. "I think it looks silly. H. M. doesn't like it much, either." The sandy-haired jockey was in his forties and his accent was very Australian, but he seemed an educated man and he had an open face that was very likable.

"Tell me something about those famous Royal Cambodian dancers," I said.

"H. M. does *not* keep a harem of dancing girls, if that's what you mean. He is a confirmed bachelor. He spent a year in a Buddhist monastery, y'know. There are court dances once in a while, for visiting French V.I.P.'s, but the sheilas—I mean the girls—they live down in the native quarter of Pnom-Penh. They have nothing to do with the king's household." The jockey picked a twig off the swept riding track and surveyed the ground for other flaws.

"What was the King doing in a monastery?"

"All Cambodian men have to live in a monastery at least a year, and the King is no exception. H. M. told me he enjoyed living as an ordinary Buddhist monk."

"You seem to be a close friend of the King's."

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"He talks to everybody," replied the jockey, checking the feed-bags of His Majesty's thoroughbreds. "He even makes trips to the outback to talk to his subjects. He knows what his people want and he'll give it to them, too."

The jockey agreed to take me to a performance of Cambodian dancers providing I did not call them the *royal* dancers. He led me to a Pnom-Penh slum, then down a garbage-strewn alley, and stopped before a collapsing wooden shanty. "This is where the sheilas live and dance," he said, pushing open a creaking door. Girls looking about ten years old were lined up, being sewed into heavy, jeweled costumes. Then each one clasped silver bracelets to her ankles and arms, put a silver crown on her head, and passed inspection before a toothless, wrinkled old crone with sagging breasts.

"That hag was once the most famous Cambodian dancer of them all," the jockey said. "She performed before the courts of Europe, in the late nineteenth century."

The little girls moved onstage as if they had been hypnotized. They bent their curved hands into symbols and their eyes, the color and shape of ripe olives, darted from side to side in expressionless doll faces. Their skinny torsos remained almost motionless.

"Very classical dance," said the jockey. "Something about the Hindu god Krishna making love with his milkmaids. The Cambodians haven't been Hindus for 500 years, but they still dance the old Hindu legends."

When the youngsters slipped back into the wings, the crone whipped them with a rope ending in a metal ball. I tried to stop her, but the jockey pulled me aside.

"They are used to being whipped as punishment for making mistakes. Don't interfere. They wouldn't understand. Come on, let's join the audience."

The audience, all dusky Cambodians, laughed, did set-ting-up exercises, and noisily sucked sugar cane all during the three-hour performance. They glanced at the dancers only occasionally. "Nobody is very interested in these classi-

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cal dances any more," explained the jockey. On our way out I saw the old ballet mistress whipping the girls again, and shrieking with jealous fury.

On the way back to my hotel, we passed a night club where a band was playing the "One O'Clock Jump." Slim young Cambodian girls, about sixteen, dressed in tight skirts and blouses, twirled in authentic jitterbug. The audience consisted of Chinese boys, who watched the girls with laughing, appreciative eyes.

"The Chinese are sons of rich merchants around here," said the jockey. "Chinese own the businesses in Pnom-Penh. The Cambodians are no good at commerce." A Chinese boy in the audience walked over to the drums and gave a passable imitation of Gene Krupa.

Less than an hour's flight from Pnom-Penh lay the melancholy, deserted ruins of Angkor Wat, the capital of Cambodia during the days of her glory—the ninth and tenth centuries. The French-built Grand Hôtel des Ruines was full of French Army officers who were taking advantage of the Christmas holidays to visit the wonders their compatriots discovered hidden in the forest less than a hundred years before.

One evening I found Angkor's sprawling towers and terraces bathed in a weird green light. Monkeys chattered from the statues of Cambodia's leper king, who built temples to himself to prove his own divinity. Bats flew around the weatherbeaten stone serpents which formed balustrades for staircases and terraces. A grassy path was flanked by stone men carrying stone pythons on their shoulders. The men carrying the serpent on one side had Oriental eyes and benign expressions, but the men on the other side, better preserved, had round eyes and bared their teeth in ferocious grins. I supposed the round-eyed men represented the people who came from the west, from Siam, and fought the Cambodians, 600 years before, leaving Angkor Wat in ruins.

Hideous, white roots of jungle plants, looking like snakes,

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ran down the stone corridors of Angkor now, entwining gates and splitting walls with their determined life.

I remembered that in Hindu villages elsewhere in Asia natives still spoke of the days of *naga-raj*—serpent rule. The stone nagas of Angkor were headless now.

I stood for nearly half an hour in a huge, silent rotunda dominated by statues of the Hindu god, Vishnu, and the Cambodian king who thought he was his reincarnation. Then, suddenly uneasy, I ran out of Angkor's inner walls. As I walked across the causeway over the moat, I heard Frenchmen behind me in the ruins. Their voices echoed clearly down the corridors. Then I heard three shots. I decided the Frenchmen were shooting a monkey and continued on to the Grand Hôtel des Ruines. For some reason, I felt cold and nervous. I noticed my hands were sweaty and trembling.

At dinner that night I learned that three French officers were killed in the rotunda at Angkor Wat, about the time I left. Snipers, hidden behind statues and towers, picked them off as they stood there, looking at the faces of Vishnu. No doubt the snipers were at their posts when I stood there, but they were unwilling to give away their position by shooting at a woman. They held their fire for more important prey.

No more tourists visited Angkor Wat that year. French troops cautiously combed the temples, halls, and terraces, looking for Issaraks, the Cambodian guerrillas fighting for independence from France. Machine guns chipped the statues of gods and kings and found the Issaraks hidden behind them. A French archaeologist in the Grand Hôtel listened to the sound of the firing with his face in his hands. "They are ruining Angkor," he cried desolately. "It will never be the same." Nobody paid any attention to him.

A young Frenchman, carrying the *képi* of the Foreign Legion, asked me to have a cognac with him. He was exceedingly unhappy; because of the Issaraks his leave was canceled and he had to go back to his Legion outpost in a village called Kralanh. He had an inspiration. "Mademoiselle, come

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with me and spend Christmas Eve with the Foreign Legion at Kralanh. You can return here the next day. It would be a *divertissement* to bring a young American girl to Kralanh, as a Christmas surprise." The ex-Red Cross girl in me rose to the occasion. Yes, it would be a *divertissement* to cheer up the Foreign Legion at Christmastime.

The next morning we jeeped over the road to Kralanh, past indolent Cambodians who squatted on the banks of canals with fishing rods, peeled fruit after it dropped in their laps, and occasionally bothered to chase a wild chicken. The natives averted their eyes as we passed and I hoped none of them were Issaraks.

Kralanh was a village of about fifty wooden shanties raised on stilts above garbage, excrement, and pigs. My escort explained that the Cambodians had all fled before the Foreign Legion moved in and Kralanh had nothing in it: "Only a few pots, worthless." He led me to the hut of the commanding officer in the center of the village and pushed me up the creaking, swaying steps. I walked alone into a roomful of French officers.

"*Je suis correspondante américaine,*" I stuttered. The Frenchmen stared at me without saying a word. Finally a young, gray-eyed *sous-lieutenant* introduced himself, in English, as Robert Golbin, and said I was very, very, very welcome indeed. The others laughed. A Captain pushed forward and asked me if I wanted a *douche*. I backed out, toward the stairs, and then remembered *douche* is the French word for shower. Golbin shouted for silence. "We are frightening her," he said. Then he turned to me.

"Please, mademoiselle, you are welcome here. We are honorable men. We will not—" He broke off and his handsome face turned crimson. The Captain, smiling, ordered Heidsieck champagne to toast the strange fortune that brought an American girl to Kralanh. Golbin assured me the Heidsieck was vintage 1729 and the best to be had. "Even in Paris they do not have champagne like this tonight."



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We were sitting around a rough wooden table, toasting Noël, when it occurred to me that the rather sissified warrant officer at the foot of the table might be a woman. She was dressed in clean khaki shorts and shirt, exactly like the men. Her brown hair was cut like a man's and her breasts were not apparent. But her high voice, fine, patrician features, and her antagonism toward me gave her away. I asked Golbin who she was.

"Suzanne Travers, the only woman member of the Foreign Legion anywhere in the world," he replied. When she overheard her name, Warrant Officer Travers gulped the rest of her champagne and left the hut.

"She is the bravest among us," continued Golbin. "Sometimes we have to send messages to other Foreign Legion outposts, along roads raided by Issaraks. Travers volunteers for the job and she drives like a madman. She has never been caught. But shot at, yes—many times."

"Does she fight with you, too?"

"Of course. She is a very good marksman. They *say* she was once the skeet champion of England."

"She's English?"

"They *say* she is the daughter of an English admiral. But she speaks only French now because that is the language of the Foreign Legion. She considers the Legion her nationality, too."

"Why did she join?"

"Ah, that is a question you must never ask of a Legionnaire." Golbin added that Travers had been sworn into the Legion four years before, in North Africa. She fought with the Thirteenth Demi-Brigade there and then in Syria and Lebanon before the outfit was sent to Indochina.

"You will sleep in the hut of Suzanne Travers tonight," Golbin said. "You will be safe there because she has a thoroughbred German police dog that was once the pride of Rommel's Afrika Korps."

Travers showed me to an Army cot placed on the veranda

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of the hut. She would not speak English and her jumble of rapid, idiomatic French was unintelligible to me. When I started to ask her questions in my halting, college French, she went inside the shanty with her police dog, pistol, dagger, and flashlight, and slammed the door. I was left alone in the moonless blackness of the veranda.

Kralanh was ringed by thick forest. During the night I heard what I thought were panthers and hyenas. Beneath me, in the garbage pile and toilet under the veranda, I heard the slithering of what sounded like snakes. I was terrified. Every nerve and muscle in my body quivered. Suddenly I screamed, over and over again, hysterically. Travers bounced out of her room and put her flashlight full in my face. She muttered some contemptuous words in French and then she and the police dog went back into the hut. I was alone again, but now flashlights were flickering all around the camp. A few moments later I heard Golbin's voice.

"Mademoiselle, are you all right?"

I begged him to take me off the veranda and let me sleep inside, any place. He carried me to his shanty, put me in his room, walked out, and closed the door. "I am going to sleep out here on the veranda," he called. "Don't worry, I am armed."

At dawn Golbin shook me and handed me a cup of tea and two army biscuits. He had brought my clothes from Travers's hut and he urged me to dress quickly. "We are moving out of Kralanh in a few minutes, as soon as the funerals are over."

"What funerals?"

"Last night some Issaraks got into our camp and stabbed two Legionnaires."

"Where are we going?"

"Into the forest, to look for Issaraks. I am sorry, but you will have to travel with us. You cannot stay here alone. Kralanh will be deserted within half an hour."

On Christmas morning, slight, blond, ex-Nazis of the Thirteenth Demi-Brigade stood at attention as the bodies of the

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two dead guards, each wrapped in the flag of the Foreign Legion, were lowered into the earth of Kralanh. A bugle sounded the Legion taps.

As soon as the graves were covered with soil, the entire camp jumped into jeeps and trucks to chase the Issaraks and avenge the two dead Germans who joined the Foreign Legion rather than be prisoners of war in Africa. I was put into a jeep with the Captain, a teen-aged German driver, and a huge Brazilian Negro named Santos who sat alone in the back seat with a machine gun. As we started out, the Captain informed me I was now the Thirteenth Demi-Brigade's lucky mascot. My screams during the night had "frightened away the Issaraks." The two stabbed Germans had been found by Legionnaires awakened by my hysterical yelps. "Doubtless many more of us would have been killed if you had not sounded the alarm," said the Captain.

"I didn't know Issaraks were in the camp."

"Why did you scream then?"

"Just nerves, I guess."

The Captain patted my knee. "*Oui, je sais*, I, too, suffered the first night in Kralanh. However, one gets used to it."

I looked around for Suzanne Travers, but she was not in any of the jeeps or trucks behind us. The Captain said she was on her way, driving a message to another Legion outpost. "When the Issaraks capture us, they torture us. Travers thinks she would not be tortured because she is a woman, so she volunteers to drive the messages." The Captain shrugged. "Let us hope she is right."

"Why does Travers fight with the Legion?"

"She likes it," replied the Captain. He shrugged again. "She does not know or care why."

We drove down forest trails all morning. Occasionally we surprised herds of rare, wild cattle called *cou-pré*. They looked like small fawns and they were so fleet that none had ever been captured alive. The Captain was disappointed because we encountered no Issaraks. At noon we headed for

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the shore of a vast, shallow lake touched with brilliant kingfishers. Cambodians in straw hats and breechclouts cast nets over the glassy water and hauled in hundreds of glinting fish every time. The Legionnaires sprawled on the grass and opened boxes of American Army rations. About 60 per cent of the Legionnaires were Germans. Another 10 per cent were Poles who did not want to go back to their Communist homeland. The rest were French or Ukrainians.

Golbin brought me a can of meat and some crackers. He told me we were going to spend the night in Sisaphon: "Much more civilized than Kralanh."

After lunch we sped down forest trails again, still looking for Issaraks. Suddenly we confronted a wall of flame and smoke. The Captain sprang out of the jeep, shouting orders to the Legionnaires in the trucks behind. Someone threw me under a truck just as the Issaraks started shooting from the branches of the trees above us. I heard machine-gun fire and the swish of hand grenades. Then I saw I was sharing my hideaway with a snake. War Correspondent Ebener fainted, missed all the details, and didn't come to until the Issaraks had fled, leaving behind three dead who had toppled from their tree shelters. The flames died down.

"The Issaraks were expecting us. They started that fire by pouring gasoline over branches laid across the road," Golbin said. "*Oui, oui*, they have ambushed us that way before." He jerked his head down the trail. "If we turn back now, we will find another flaming barricade, about a mile from here." Golbin glanced at the three dead Issaraks, very young boys, wearing only khaki shorts. He ordered two Germans to dig graves for them. The Captain hurried up, consulting his watch.

"We have no time to bury them, Golbin. I want to get to Sisaphon before dark. Let the Issaraks bury them."

We rode on for another hour or so, then stopped before a burned bridge. The charred remains were slowly sinking into

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the river. The Captain ordered the convoy to form itself into a circle.

"The Issaraks might be waiting for us over there, on the opposite bank," explained the Captain. "It is too risky to try and get our trucks across the river at this hour. The Issaraks know we hate to stay in the forest at night. They think we will push on for Sisaphon. *Alors*, we will disappoint them."

To calm my nerves, Golbin gave me brandy, one American cigarette after another, and quoted sonorous French poetry. We watched the Legionnaires drive the trucks into a circular fort, then station themselves behind their mounted machine guns, their eyes on the trees.

"Drink a lot, mademoiselle, so you will sleep," Golbin said, passing me the brandy bottle again. I pushed it away, feeling sick at my stomach. Golbin opened my jaws and poured the remainder of the brandy down my throat.

"I know what you are thinking, mademoiselle," he said. "You think the Legionnaires are criminals and cutthroats who kill just for excitement. Perhaps we are. But we do not rape sleeping women who are under our protection." His gray eyes had a sadness in them. His brown hair was streaked with white, although his face did not look more than thirty. His nails were manicured and unlike the others, he did not have a beard. Golbin was not tall, but his body was lean and muscular and his movements had a self-composed dignity.

"You were never a criminal," I said.

"No, but I am half Jewish," he replied with a bitter laugh. "I am also Swiss. My country was neutral during the war. I was not."

"And now most of the men you command are Nazis, your former enemies."

Golbin shrugged. "An accident of history." He jumped to his feet, hauled a piece of canvas out of a truck, and spread it out on the ground for me.

"Go to sleep, mademoiselle. The Issaraks will not attack

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again tonight. They know we are better armed and we are waiting for them. They do not fight us unless they can take us by surprise. Good night."

Golbin joined the other officers lying on the ground in the center of the circle. I heard them heckling him. "Be careful," Golbin said. "I think she really is a journalist, as she says." They lowered their voices. The brandy made my head reel and I fell asleep.

At dawn Golbin handed me a tin cup of very sweet tea and a stale biscuit. The Legionnaires laid logs across the stream and then pushed our jeeps and trucks across. A platoon spread out along the river bank with their rifles and machine guns ready. Nobody spoke. The troops moved mechanically, as if they had done this many times before. The Captain paced nervously back and forth, glancing into the trees. Occasionally he called, and was answered by a Legionnaire posted on the opposite bank. Finally the last truck was across and we started down the forest trails again.

Sometimes we spent the night at deserted rubber and poppy plantations. The clothes of the French owners who had fled for the safety of Saigon still hung in the musty wardrobes. Occasionally we put up in towns and ate bowls of steaming noodles served by Chinese merchants. I lost track of the days and our whereabouts, existing in a state of constant fear.

One morning Golbin told me we were headed for Saigon, which was now surrounded by Viet-Minh guerrillas closing in for an attack. The Viet-Minh were different from the Issaraks, Golbin said. "The Viet-Minh are Communist-led, and they are organized, disciplined, well armed. The Issaraks operate in scattered gangs. We will come back to Cambodia and deal with them later."

On the road to Saigon we were ambushed again. This time there was no warning barricade of flames. The Viet-Minh suddenly fired at us from both sides of the road. I do not re-

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member how I got out of the jeep and under it. I remember only a fleeting glimpse of Golbin's face behind a gun. He seemed to be laughing.

After a few minutes of fire, one dead and one wounded Viet-Minh lay on the road. They looked like dolls, with their stuffing ripped out. I became violently sick at my stomach.

Golbin had to shake me and slap my face to get me to move back into the jeep. "Cry," he commanded. "You are a woman. Go ahead and cry. Thank you! God you can still cry at the sight of dead boys."

As we neared Saigon one evening, voices spoke in German from the forest along the trail. They were Nazis who had deserted the Foreign Legion to fight with the Viet-Minh. They called out the names of our sergeants, urging them to desert, too. "The danger is less on our side," the voices called. "The pay is good. After a while you can get out to Australia." Our German sergeants answered with a burst of machine-gun fire. That night they lay in their trucks, proudly singing the *Horst Wessel* song and *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles*.

One tall, dignified, gray-haired Prussian sergeant never mixed with his men. He always sat apart when we ate, but at night I often saw him with our Captain, conferring over maps. When I tried to talk to him, he gave me a steely stare. Golbin told me he was once a colonel, in Rommel's Afrika Korps.

On New Year's Eve, our convoy drove into the Foreign Legion camp outside Saigon. This was Headquarters, with neat stone-and-stucco bungalows covered with purple bougainvillea, a parade ground, and an officers' club filled with the best wines and liquors of France. Golbin led me to his bungalow, where a German servant was pressing his white dress-uniform and his four rows of ribbons, including the Croix de Guerre, American, English, and Polish honors. I asked Golbin to tell me how he had won them.

"No, mademoiselle," he said, laughing. "Past honors are

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like past loves. I do not speak of them." He pushed me toward the splash bath outside his bungalow and handed me clean, women's clothes, made in France.

"A Foreign Legion Headquarters has everything," he said. "Even pretty clothes for unexpected lady visitors."

The New Year's celebrations were sedate, despite the champagne, toasts, and rollicking Legion songs. Shortly before midnight Suzanne Travers walked in, wearing a white uniform, without any decorations. The other officers of the Thirteenth Demi-Brigade jumped to their feet and shook her hand in welcome. Travers nodded to me, murmured *bon soir*, and took a chair at the farthest corner of the officers' club. Her brown hair was freshly washed but combed straight back with no attempt at a wave or a curl. Her thin, rather pinched face wore no make-up whatever, but the crease in her white trousers was pressed to a knife-edge. She crossed her legs like a man.

"I have always thought Travers wanted to be a man and that is why she lives like one," Golbin said. "But now I am not so sure. There is something in the way Travers looks at you that is wholly feminine."

We were toasting the New Year, when artillery and machine-gun fire burst around us with a deafening roar. The officers rushed out, overturning champagne bottles in their haste. I was alone for a while, watching the spilled champagne drip from the tables onto the floor, and then there was silence. The officers came back laughing.

"*Rien*. It was only our Germans celebrating the New Year."

Gaiety could not be revived, however, and the party broke up.

Golbin and I spent the rest of that New Year's Eve sitting in his bungalow, fanning the hot, stifling air. He told me he had a married sister, living in Madison, Wisconsin.

"I, too, would like to become an American citizen some day," Golbin said. "But probably I would not be acceptable. I have protected myself against that disappointment. I have



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bought a little bistro in Algiers, where there will always be the Foreign Legion."

"Why do you like the Legion, Robert?"

"I know only fighting and the loyalty and camaraderie of soldier life," he replied. "Who but God can determine right from wrong these days? I fight for order, against armed rebellion, anywhere in France's territories. Is that not enough reason to fight?" I said nothing and in the darkness I could not see his face.

"Perhaps I am afraid to try another life," Golbin continued.

"Afraid of what?"

"*Ennui*," he replied. "When I was in Paris a year ago, the men looked so bored. Bored with their lives, no excitement, no surprise, no change."

After a little silence, Golbin spoke again. His tone sounded a little defensive. "My life is not useless. These past two days we Legionnaires succeeded in breaking the ring of Viet-Minh guerrillas closing on Saigon. Our skirmishes were part of a plan—all the Legion camps in Cambodia were ordered to head for Saigon simultaneously, in order to break through that Viet-Minh ring. If some of us Legionnaires had not died, there would be no live Frenchmen celebrating the New Year in Saigon tonight. Saigon would be another Hanoi."

Hanoi was 800 miles north of us, and it had been peaceful when I left for Cambodia. The French had been negotiating there with Ho Chi Minh, the Viet-Minh leader, and there had been much talk of an accord which would bring peace to Indochina. I asked Golbin what had happened in Hanoi.

"On the night of December 19, the Viet-Minh emerged from secret, underground tunnels they had built under the city and captured suburbs, offices, the business section. Hundreds of French women and children were massacred. The Viet-Minh are beaten there now, I hear, but not much is left of Hanoi."

Two days later I flew north with troop reinforcements. Our American lend-lease plane was heavily overloaded and flew

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very slowly, low over miles of jungle. Finally we came to a wide plain of rice paddies, watered by streams and canals.

"This is the delta of the Red River," said a French Army officer sitting beside me. "Here we used to grow enough rice for everybody and for profitable export, too. Now, *rien*. The guerrillas hide in the rice paddies and our tanks cannot go in after them. That is the reason this war in Indochina is going badly for us. We cannot use tanks."

Hanoi's airfield was heavily guarded by French troops. On a steel bridge spanning the Red River, soldiers were lying on their stomachs behind rifles and machine guns, peering through binoculars into the sluggish brown water and surveying the sandy islands in midstream.

"If the Viet-Minh had succeeded in dynamiting this bridge," said the French Army officer, "they would have all of Hanoi today. But fortunately we held the airfield and this bridge. And now we are teaching them a lesson they will never forget." He pointed up. American lend-lease planes, still wearing their Air Force markings, were dropping fire bombs on the thatch-roofed huts of the villages ringing the airport. Instantly gigantic flames licked at the sky.

"But surely the villages have been evacuated," I said.

The officer kept his eyes on the sky. "Indochina is now in total war," he said. "The Viet-Minh does not respect our civilians. *Alors*, we do not respect theirs."

Hanoi was still smoking, though it was two weeks after the Viet-Minh attack. Shops and offices were gutted black skeletons. The officer explained that the French used napalm bombs in order to quell "the disturbance."

The stench of rotting bodies was overpowering. The Frenchman put his handkerchief to his nose. "The Viet-Minh bodies are still down there, in the tunnels under the street," he said. The streets were a mass of debris, and barbed wire marked new mine fields. "We had to throw explosives down the sewers to kill the Viet-Minh. That is why the streets are so—so—" The officer spread his hands. There was no way of

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describing Hanoi's streets, caved-in here, rising in hills of rubble a few feet away.

The officer dropped me off at a hotel, a fortress with its furniture stacked up against the windows and doorways. The guests were taking turn at guard. The first night I was there, a Viet-Minh climbed up on the roof and raised a red flag. In the morning, a French soldier scrambled up to take it down and was shot dead by an unseen sniper.

A French public relations officer called on me at the hotel. "Mademoiselle, Hanoi is completely safe now. I would like you to see the atrocities committed by the Viet-Minh here." We walked through the residential section to view the bodies of mutilated French women. One had her belly slit and her unborn baby placed at her side. Frenchmen lay with gouged eyes and burned genitals, dead in the gardens of their villas.

"Why don't you bury them?" I asked. Public Relations said the burials were going on as fast as possible. To prove it, he led me to a Hanoi park where coolies were digging trenches, piling rotting white and brown corpses together into them, and hastily covering them with earth.

"The Viet-Minh thought they could frighten us out of Indochina. They thought we would leave when we saw this horrible massacre. Ah, they are subhuman." He led me to the center of the town and down into an underground passage which linked cellar to cellar from stores to offices.

"These underground passages extend all the way out to the suburbs. Look, here is an arsenal. And here is a storehouse." I glanced at a pile of rifles and a few sacks of rice and cooking utensils. Near by lay the burned bodies of Viet-Minh boys, piled 10 deep behind a single machine gun.

"They ran out of ammunition," explained Public Relations. "And then we killed them by throwing a fire bomb down that sewer there."

"Did you know these tunnels and arsenals and storehouses existed, underneath the city, before the Viet-Minh attacked?" I asked.

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"No, of course, we didn't. Why should we suspect such a thing? We had a *modus vivendi* with Ho Chih Minh. He was right here in Hanoi, negotiating with us. He left just before the attack, of course."

"Tell me exactly what happened on December 19."

"That night the French soldiers were confined to the Citadel because there had been street incidents that day. About twenty minutes to eight—it was already dark—the guerrillas drove a captured train across the road leading from the Citadel to Hanoi's business section. Then they cut the telephone and power lines. By eight o'clock they were streaming from their tunnels and cellars into the offices and homes and stores of the French. Only a few soldiers were able to get out of the Citadel to help that night because the train drawn across the road was full of armed guerrillas. When the soldiers did get out of the Citadel, the next morning, they found the Viet-Minh had already captured much of the downtown section. The Viet-Minh almost won here, you know, and if they had—Saigon was next."

On our way out of the tunnels we stepped over the body of a young Viet-Minh soldier with his intestines spread out around him. He was still clutching something in his fist. The public relations officer bent down and peered at him.

"He tried to throw one of those handmade hand grenades. They kill themselves using those things. Ah, they are fanatics. There is no doubt about that now. We will not negotiate any more."

I went to dinner at the home of the American Vice-consul in Hanoi, James O'Sullivan. He was a young diplomat with a strong, athlete's face who wore horn-rimmed glasses to make himself look older. O'Sullivan apologized for the canned fruit salad we were eating, saying it was not the sort of thing he usually served guests. "No food stores have been open here since December 19. I have—" An artillery shell burst overhead, sending a picture crashing to the floor. "Let's go down to the basement for our coffee, Miss Ebener."

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His basement was stacked with barrels of drinking water and canned food. Evidently, he had been expecting a revolt in Hanoi.

"I knew the French and the Viet-Minh would have to fight it out sooner or later. I guessed sooner," O'Sullivan explained. We heard shells bursting in rapid succession.

"Those are French," O'Sullivan said. "Probing for a Viet-Minh hideout near here. Well, sit down on a barrel and make yourself comfortable. This might keep up for hours." The shelling kept up for three days and two nights. I confided to the Vice-consul that I was afraid to make a dash for my hotel. My luck might run out, this time.

"On extraordinary occasions the rules of etiquette have to be broken," O'Sullivan said. His Irish sense of humor sustained him on the extraordinary occasion his dinner guest stayed fifty-six hours.

While there was shelling we were very successful in keeping up a bantering patter. But the silent lulls were nerve-racking. Once I asked O'Sullivan if he thought Hanoi's attack from underground sewers and arsenals was a model plan for takeover of a city, perhaps written in some Communist textbook.

"Perhaps, and tried out here for the first time. Of course, the French residents in Hanoi were deaf, dumb, and blind. They would not face the fact that the Indochinese want independence and will fight for it—even under Communists. The French who are dead now did not bother to keep themselves informed." We were silent a few minutes.

"Americans can no more ignore international politics than could the French women you saw massacred in their homes," O'Sullivan concluded.

I thought of my young sister in Milwaukee, Ginny, the widow of a pilot who died somewhere in the Orient during World War II. Ginny had a young son, yet she had written me that she could not get interested in foreign affairs.

After there had been no shelling for several hours, we

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climbed into O'Sullivan's jeep, draped fore and aft with American flags. On the way to my hotel we passed a park and a lagoon. O'Sullivan pointed to a pagoda built on an island in the glassy water. It was still flying the red Viet-Minh flag.

A young Belgian correspondent who worked for the Associated Press, Michel Moutschen, called on me at the hotel and suggested we go on maneuvers with the French troops, who were now pushing out of the city, down the road connecting Hanoi with the port of Haiphong, about sixty miles away.

"Clearing the road to Haiphong is the most important operation in Indochina now," Moutschen said. "We have to ship supplies into the delta. Once the supply route between Haiphong and Hanoi is reopened we'll quickly reconquer the delta area."

Moutschen's use of *we* and *us* when speaking of the French puzzled me and I asked him to tell me something about himself as we jeeped out to the front lines.

"I fought with the underground in France and Belgium during the World War," Moutschen said. I glanced at his skinny body and his eyes, peering at me through thick spectacles. He understood my look. "I would still like to be a soldier," he confessed. "But I cannot pass any physical exam, so I am a war correspondent instead."

About five miles east of Hanoi's city limits, we climbed out, and followed French troops fanning out over the neglected rice fields of the delta. We pushed through waist-high weeds, stumbled over broken irrigation ditches, and the bodies of Viet-Minh soldiers, clad in rags. Moutschen didn't seem to see them.

"Our objective is that French fort over there, which is occupied by enemy snipers," Moutschen explained, pointing to a tower about a quarter of a mile off the road. The stench of the Viet-Minh bodies, burst open by hand grenades, began to make me ill again. I sank down in the shade of a small

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stone pagoda-shrine and told Moutschen I could not go on. His body was trembling with excitement and his face was flushed. "All right, but I'm going. I want to see us take that fort," he said. He followed a few French soldiers crouching through the grass.

I heard the commands called out to the artillerymen and watched the shells drop on the fort for hours. Finally Moutschen came back, jubilant. "We took it," he said. "Nobody got out of that fort alive. Come on, let's go back to town. I've got to file a story." I envied Moutschen. I couldn't write a story that day. My brain was numb. Moutschen assured me that the Viet-Minh were as good as defeated in the delta.

A few weeks later Moutschen was dead, killed by a Viet-Minh sniper in a Hanoi street. Seven years later the French had to admit defeat, and cede the delta to the victorious Viet-Minh.

After a week in Hanoi, I flew back to Saigon aboard a hospital plane, jammed to nearly twice its capacity with wounded French soldiers. As I changed pus-saturated bandages, I noticed how frail these boys looked. Many of them were hollow-chested, with bent bones and large, twisted joints. Then I remembered these were the children who grew up in Nazi-occupied France. Now they were an army of occupation themselves, halfway around the world. A tow-headed French boy thought our hospital plane was the stifling hold of his troop ship as it passed through the Indian Ocean the summer before. He kept asking me to take him on deck because he was dying for lack of air. He vomited over and over, all the way to Saigon, where he died.

But Saigon was a giddy round of parties, thrown by the new French millionaires who made fortunes by exchanging French francs for Indochinese piastres. Many of the most fashionable hosts were Frenchmen who collaborated with the Nazis during the war and skipped out to Indochina to avoid facing a French court on charges of treason. Others

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were respectable importers, bringing to Saigon the luxuries France makes so well. The Paris of the Orient was almost hysterically gay. The hostile natives surrounding her filtered into the city to throw bombs in the streets, and to assassinate the Indochinese who collaborated with French officials. Yet the sidewalk cafés and dance halls were crowded with Foreign Legion Germans, and Moroccans, and black Senegalese, all the colonial troops jauntily fighting for La Belle France and good pay.

To me, all Saigon seemed cultivated and cynical, with no creed but enjoyment. It was the most depressing city I had ever known.

Somehow the ladies of Saigon can make American women feel like hybrid clods. Their tiny figures are draped in full trousers of white silk crepe and tight, knee-length blouses cut in flying panels. When they are walking or on bicycles, an occasional breeze lifts the French chiffon of their blouses into little clouds of pastel fluff. They have full, gentle mouths, long, black slanting eyes, and ivory skin. The bones of their cheeks, jaws, and noses, incredibly delicate, look as if they might chip. Their oiled black hair is drawn back into neat chignons, decorated with blossoms. They clip-clop along Saigon's smart rue Catinat, buying French perfumes and fingering the newest imports of hibiscus-colored silk from Lyons. Then they sip chocolate with whipped cream at the dainty, wrought-iron, marble-topped tables of "La Pagode" and talk in little trills, revealing expensive gold dental work.

One afternoon at Saigon's "Cercle de Presse," a French correspondent asked me to go with him to a cloister of Roman Catholic native monks whose anti-Communism was unquestioned.

We arrived at the monastery at sunset, when bells were calling the priests together for their evening prayers. We waited in their garden. When they emerged from the chapel, we joined them in their evening walk along the flower-lined



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paths of their tiny orchard. With breviaries in hand, dusky little monks told us that all their Catholic parishioners in the near-by villages solidly supported the Viet-Minh.

"We tell our faithful that the Viet-Minh are godless Communists," said the abbot of the monastery, touching his rosary beads as if seeking comfort from them. "But our people say the Viet-Minh do not steal like the Foreign Legion or the African troops. And the Viet-Minh do not rape our women. What can we do when our villagers see the Viet-Minh behave and the troops of the French act like the agents of the devil himself?"

The French correspondent told the abbot about the Viet-Minh atrocities in Hanoi.

"*Oui, oui*, they are terrible toward you French, I know," replied the abbot.

"What can we do to turn the Indochinese against Communism?" asked the French correspondent.

"*Excusez-moi*, monsieur; nothing can be done until the French and their troops are out of our country," replied the abbot with soft, sad Oriental eyes. "So long as the Communists can say they are fighting for independence, so long you will have our people supporting them."

"But if we pull out, the guerrillas will take over and Indochina will be Communist, you know that."

"I think you must leave the fighting of Communism to our people," said the abbot. The French correspondent could not refrain from smiling at this naïveté.

"You have tried fighting this war with guns in the hands of foreigners and you have not won. You never will win," insisted the abbot. Then, feeling he had said too much, he pleaded with us not to mention his name because he was a simple servant of God and really knew nothing of politics or warfare.

"Perhaps the Pope would not want me to speak this way against the French who are also Catholic," he said. "But then the Pope has not been here and heard our people, who love

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God and goodness as much as he." The abbot clapped his hands. The monks and brothers silently filed into the cloister.

Two new correspondents arrived in Saigon, Bob Sherrod of the *Saturday Evening Post* and Doon Campbell of Reuters. I introduced them to Robert Golbin. They asked him questions, casually at first, then with growing interest. I sat by and listened to the skilled, professional probing by the reporters, watching a flush rise from Golbin's neck to his ears.

• "I hear that many Legionnaires here desert, is that true?" asked Sherrod.

"There are deserters, yes," replied Golbin.

"What percentage—would you say—deserts here?" asked Campbell.

"I have no idea," laughed Golbin. I had never heard him laugh that way before. He was swishing the cognac in his glass and he seemed perfectly composed, but his eyes looked as if he were being whipped. I realized, then, that the questions were tearing down the only thing Golbin believed in, loyalty to the Foreign Legion. Both reporters noticed Golbin's eyes and closed their notebooks at the same time.

"Strange chap," murmured Campbell as Golbin walked away. "Somehow I don't think he's a typical Legionnaire."

We gossiped about correspondents we knew, including Weller. My hand was shaking so that my coffee cup rattled on its saucer.

"You better get out of Indochina, kid," Sherrod said. "Your nerves are going. Take it from an old warhorse like me and head for a peaceful country." It was the second time that week a correspondent suggested I was cracking up. But as soon as Weller's name was mentioned I knew, in a vague way, that I needed more than a peaceful country. I remembered Changchun when the mortar shells were landing in the back yard and I had felt a quiet contentment in just sitting next to Weller, behind a china cabinet, listening to our windows being smashed.

I had received no word from Weller in four months, but

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after another sleepless night, I cabled him: **WONDERING IF SHOULD LONDONWARD.** I signed it "Hu Shih," a nickname Weller had given me in Changchun. If he didn't remember Hu Shih, I thought, there was no point in my going to London. My answer came back that same night. **EYEM BOSTONWARD-ING SUGGEST YOU SEE SIAM, INDONESIA WHICH INTERESTINGEST LOVE WELLER.** I knew Weller had a fourteen-year-old daughter in Boston and his divorce, four years before, had left him bitter. It was obvious that Weller was not romantically interested in me, and I tried to forget him.

Siam seemed as good a place as any to write my stories on Indochina, which, I knew, could never pass French censorship intact. Because of the political instability in France and the constant debates over the military budget, the censors in Saigon liked only optimistic stories which indicated that there soon would be a successful offensive and a "military solution." In February 1947, I boarded a Danish freighter bound for Bangkok.



## VI

# East and West of Bangkok

SIAM was enchanting seen from the deck of my freighter as it wound up the Chao Phya River. Life gonged, clattered, and sang on the banks a few yards away. Buddhist monks in orange cotton robes paddled from house to house with their begging bowls. Marriage and cremation processions streamed to the gilded, spired temples, each accompanied by an orchestra that sounded as if it were banging pots and pans. Incense sticks smoked in tiny birdhouse shrines honoring the local village spirits.

Rafts and sampans poled up and down the Chao Phya all day and most of the night, loaded to the gunwales with the best rice in the world. All Asia hungered for rice and the astute Siamese were the only ones who had it for export. Prairies of rice paddies stretched from the river to the horizon. Peasants, thigh-deep in rich mud, walked behind their water buffalo on land they owned. Siam had no Communist guerrillas in the forests, no ugly industries, no rioting proletariat. It had just enough people to be busy, gay, and prosperous in an over-industrialized world.

We passed boatloads of Siamese playing a game with male and female kites. Hoots of derision rose from the water as a

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careless flyer allowed his ponderous star-shaped male kite to touch the skittish diamond-shaped female kite half its size. The object of the game was to make the bamboo hooks of the male kite get entangled into the loop of the female kite and gently draw her down, by cunning and maneuver instead of weight and force.

Boats of men and some of women competed in "sings"—extemporaneous tales concerning adultery. The men chanted reasons why an erring lady should return to her husband, while the laughing women sang back reasons why she shouldn't.

The Danish ship's Captain joined me at the rail to watch pretty girls with burnished skins drop their sarongs as they bathed. Naked children fell in and out of sampans all day long, screeching with delight. We could look into the houses raised on stilts and watch families cut hair, clean ears, eat heaping platters of saffron rice, and gossip with their neighbors.

"For nearly a century, Europeans told the Siamese the Chao Phya was unnavigable for large, oceangoing vessels," said the Captain. "Therefore cargo and passengers had to be transferred to British lighters where the river meets the sea. A lot of profit was made in hauling goods those last fifty miles to Bangkok's docks. Then after the war a little Mr. Scott, sitting in your American Embassy in Bangkok, thought up a way to help American business. He hired American engineers to sound the river and chart a course. Only a few months ago a big freighter, flying the American flag, sailed right up the Chao Phya, past these Siamese villages. The natives—as you say it—were flabbergasted. That first American freighter triumphantly anchored at Bangkok where she was pelted with flowers and offered gifts of sweet rice cakes. The American Information Service threw an open-house party aboard her, with free Coca-Cola. Siamese swarmed to the ship and inspected everything, the engines, the flush toilets, the navigation instruments. And that is why you have

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American business and American advisers pouring into Siam today. He was a very wise diplomat, that little Mr. Scott."

Making the most of a good idea, the American Government later presented Siam with a dredger, the *Manhattan*, so that the river could be kept clear of mudbanks and open to all the ships of the world. There was a solemn dedication ceremony aboard the *Manhattan* with speechmaking American and Siamese politicians. In the midst of the dedication ceremony, the Siamesé Prime Minister was whisked off the ship, kidnapped by insurgents. A *coup d'état* was announced and there was a new prime minister a few hours later. Thereafter we greeted each new military clique that ran Siam's government and business with impartial dollar gifts.

Bangkok's wharves were stacked high with crates from the U. S. A.: plastic belts for Buddhists who didn't care to use leather, alarm clocks, men's shirts, frothy nylon underwear, Mickey Mouse watches, electric phonographs, and radios.

At sunset the Chinese coolies stopped their unloading and squatted on the piers in groups of five or six. They passed a long needle and gave each other injections in the thighs.

"Dope," explained the Captain. "Seamy side of the Orient, eh?" Within a few minutes the coolies, all Chinese, closed their eyes. Their mouths hung open and they rolled over against the crates.

"The Chinese here don't smoke opium pipes any more. An injection of heroin from a nice, sharp needle made in the U. S. A. brings better results in less time."

As we walked down the pier, we passed a group of Chinese women coolies who had just taken their evening injections. Their heads swayed from side to side like charmed cobras. Saliva dribbled from their mouths and some of them moaned.

"Pleasure, not pain," said the Captain. "That stuff is food, sex, and amusement, all in one. Strange thing, tomorrow they will be ready to work again—for the price of another jab."

I was the house-guest of an American Military Attaché in

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Bangkok who knew the highest-ranking Siamese Army officers in power at the moment. Each was married to a Princess who traced her ancestry to the days of Siam's great kingly harems, when the loveliest women were brought from the corners of the land to fill the new capital with children of royal blood.

The Princesses were delighted with their new King, Phumiphon, a serious, spectacled, slim young man studying in Switzerland. Phumiphon composed sweet tunes and needed a bride. His brother, King Ananda, had been found shot to death in his bedroom a few months before, and his body lay in state, awaiting a royal cremation.

The Princesses told me what a power women were in modern Siam, now that polygamy had been abolished. They mentioned career women who owned members of parliament, ships, import companies, hotels, godowns, and skyscrapers of five stories.

An educated Princess who liked to use a lorgnette told me it was quite erroneous to believe career women were new to Siam.

"A Chinese traveler who came here during the Ming Dynasty wrote—and these are his exact words: 'In Siam when affairs are to be settled, they are settled by women. In determination and judgment the women really surpass the men.'"

Another Princess added thoughtfully that Siamese women were so successful because every Siamese male spends much time as a monk in a Buddhist monastery. "When our men come out, they do not like to bother with worldly things. So we women handle the worldly things for them."

Even King Mongkut spent more than twenty years in a monastery, the Princesses said. After he came out, he fathered eighty children. Apparently love is not considered a worldly thing.

"Anna exaggerated the influence she had over King Mongkut," said a Princess one day. "Really, her book is not truthful. The King spent very little time with her. He spent most

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of his time with the *royal* ladies." No Siamese today thinks much of Anna. It was explained to me that Anna's son was too sharp a businessman, and owned much of Bangkok's commerce before he died.

After the war, Bangkok suddenly found itself on the new round-the-world air routes. The gold and jade Buddhas were carefully dusted and the gay temples thronged with tourists: G.I.'s and Army clerks from occupied Japan, air crews, salesmen, motion-picture cameramen, and American officials hurrying to Asia to give away money and advice. Refrigerators and air-conditioning moved into the unpainted teakwood houses, outboard motors were hitched onto the sampans and chugged along the canals. American ex-guerrillas who didn't want to go home built hotels, organized silk weaving, and studied at King Chulalongkorn's pagoda university. Bangkok turned into an international capital, a truly gay and happy one.

After two weeks in Siam, my free-lance articles on Indochina were finished and mailed to an agent in New York. My book of traveler's checks was growing thin and I had to seek fresh stories of news interest. I thought editors might want to buy articles about the spreading war in Java. I flew to Indonesia.

Dutch-held Batavia was packed, five to a hotel room, with stolid Dutch businessmen. They were waiting for the natives to give up their revolutionary nonsense so that rubber, copra, and sugar would flow again to the world's hungry markets. The businessmen sputtered at the Army, demanding "action" and their prewar plantations. The Dutch soldiers, many of them just released from Japanese prison camps, tried to force a military showdown. But the Indonesian rebels avoided showdown fights. They preferred skirmishes in the countryside, hit-and-run raids, blockades of the cities, occupation of the plantations. They intended to make the war long and costly for the Dutch, so costly that Indonesia would no longer be a profitable Dutch colony.



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The Dutch public information office could find no hotel room for me, but I was invited into the home of scholarly Dr. Olke Van der Plas and his wife, Annie. Both had been born in Indonesia and considered it their lifetime home. The bearded doctor, dark as an Indonesian, a lover of its Muslim religion, but of pure Dutch blood, had been Governor of East Java when the Japanese conquered the Indies. He was airlifted to General MacArthur's Headquarters in Australia because the Dutch Government considered his knowledge of the dialects and beachheads of Indonesia useful for future Allied landings. His wife, like all the other wives of Dutch officials, had to stay behind. She spent four years hungering in Japanese concentration camps. Now Olke and Annie were reunited, only to hear the natives swearing by Allah that all the Dutch would be "pushed into the sea" by the Indonesian Revolutionary Army.

Indonesian officials were eager to have American correspondents see the areas they controlled, to prove they could run a modern state. A Revolutionary public relations man, a lean, dark ex-medical student called Darpo, asked Stan Swinton of the A. P. and me to cross the lines. Dutch officials thought one look at native government would convince us the Indonesians were not yet ready for self-government. They, too, gave us permission to cross the lines. We boarded a train in Batavia and rode for about an hour. Then we came to the area held by Indonesian troops, dark-skinned, bearded men with shoulder-length hair. They had sworn not to see a barber until Indonesia was independent. They stared back at us with that sullen hatred of the white man that I had come to expect everywhere in Southeast Asia—everywhere but in independent Siam.

As soon as we arrived at the rebel capital, Darpo hurried us off to a hillside to hear the Revolutionary President make a speech to nearly a hundred thousand people. In the soft, tropic night, President Soekarno held his audience spell-bound with rolling phrases. We could not understand their

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meaning, but we could feel the emotion and rhythm behind the words. Suddenly Soekarno broke into English.

"The American Declaration of Independence asserts governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed," Soekarno said. "Thomas Jefferson declared that in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of God entitle them."

Swinton nudged me in the darkness. "Did Jefferson really say that?"

"I guess so. It sounds awfully familiar."

Soekarno translated Jefferson's words for his audience squatting on the hillside.

"*Merdeka!*" the crowd yelled. "Liberty!"

Toward the end of his speech Soekarno quoted Jefferson again. "The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time. The hand of force may destroy but cannot disjoin them."

"*Merdeka! Merdeka! Merdeka!*" chanted his illiterate audience. The tumult lasted a full fifteen minutes. Then the people scattered to go back to their villages. Darpo said some of them had walked thirty miles to hear Soekarno's words.

Darpo led us to the speaker's platform and introduced us to Soekarno. He was handsome and poised in a white linen European suit. Soekarno presented me with a souvenir of Indonesia, a beautiful batik sarong. "With the compliments of the people of Indonesia," he said, "who love *merdeka* as you do." The surrounding politicians clapped. They had also clapped when Soekarno gave gifts to the Japanese during the war.

"How do you happen to know Thomas Jefferson so well?" asked Swinton. Through an interpreter, Soekarno replied that he had studied Jefferson when he was a political prisoner

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of the Dutch on an island. His followers smuggled him copies of Jefferson and Thomas Paine.

Soekarno told us he was leaving for other Javanese towns, to make more speeches, and invited us to go along, aboard his presidential Pullman. We accepted the invitation. Another passenger aboard the train was Soetan Sjahrir, the Revolutionary Government's Foreign Minister. Sjahrir was a gentle, ascetic man who, unlike Soekarno, had been openly anti-Japanese during their occupation of the Indies. He was a moral idealist, a sort of Nehru. He also had humor and political cunning. Sjahrir told us he had asked an American freighter to come to one of the ports held by the Indonesians, to pick up a load of rubber.

"The Dutch will never let you get away with that, Dr. Sjahrir," said Swinton.

Sjahrir's face lighted up with an impish, boyish smile. "That is the whole point. The Dutch may confiscate the cargo. That would make American businessmen sit up and take notice. And then the American Government will have to decide who is sovereign here in Indonesia, the Dutch or us."

"Very embarrassing position for the U. S. Government," said young Swinton, with appropriate Anglo-Saxon understatement.

Sjahrir spread his hands in a gesture of apology. "I know that. But you Americans must make up your minds. You arm the Dutch, but you say you are our friends. This dual policy cannot go on any longer. We cannot wait to find out if your Government is really our friend or our enemy. The American freighter coming here is called the *Martin Behrman*. She is due Wednesday."

On the day of decision, an excited Darpo informed us Dutch Marines had boarded the freighter when she was still at sea, put her under armed guard, and taken the American Captain prisoner. We raced around Batavia to find the "imprisoned" American ship's Captain and finally found him at

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the bar of the plush Hotel des Indes, drinking Bols. Captain Rudy Gray had a cracked, weatherbeaten face and he was somewhat bewildered by landlubbers and their ways.

"What the hell is this all about?" he demanded. "I've been sailing for twenty-five years and never got into no trouble. Now I'm finished." He tipped his head back and disconsolately gulped down another stinging Bols.

Swinton, in his most authoritative power-of-the-press manner, informed Captain Gray that his shipping company would forgive him when they saw his story in the papers. "Just tell us what happened, Captain, from the beginning," said Swinton, opening a notebook.

"Well, I have orders to go into Cheribon and pick up a load of rubber. So I load the stinking crap. We sure must be hard up for rubber. That stuff I loaded was so old it won't never bounce, no matter what they do to it in Akron."

Swinton winked at me and I gathered the age of the rubber was important, to determine its ownership.

"So then I'm sailing out of Cheribon and along comes the Dutch Marines and they board me—yeah, with guns. They tell me to put my ship into Batavia. I said: 'Look, I take my sailing orders from Isbrandtsen in New York and not from no Dutch Marines.' So the Dutch put a guard behind my helmsman—yeah, with a gun—and tell him to dock at Batavia or else.

"I don't like the looks of this show, so I fix it up with my first mate that we've got to show some resistance, so the company knows this putting into Batavia ain't our idea. When we come into the harbor, my mate, he pulls a gun—just for appearances, see—and refuses to dock the ship. So then the Dutch Marines and my first mate have a little scuffle and the Dutch take his gun away and take over my ship. I get ordered off—yeah, with a gun."

"What does the American Consul here say about all this?" asked Swinton.

Captain Gray let go with a wonderful string of salty invective.

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tive. "He said he can't do nothing for me because the Dutch Government might misunderstand and this is a Dutch country. Who's he working for, anyway, the Dutch or the U. S.?"

"Don't worry, Captain, the American Consul here is going to get a couple hundred telegrams from Washington telling him what to do about you," said Swinton, laughing.

"Awright, now you tell me something. Why did the Dutch take over my ship and cargo?"

Swinton explained the *Behrman* was a test case. "If the Dutch can confiscate your cargo, no one else is going to make commercial deals with the Indonesians without Dutch permission. And without money, the Indonesian Revolutionary Government will just go blooey."

Captain Gray stared gloomily into his gin. "I get it. A frame-up, eh?"

"Not entirely. If the rubber you loaded is as old as you say it is, it came from prewar Dutch stocks and the Dutch feel the Indonesians have no right to sell it."

A few days later an international lawyer for the Isbrandtsen Line flew into Batavia and the famous *Martin Behrman* case began its two-year run. The real point—which side the U. S. favored in Indonesia—wasn't mentioned in court. But it grew evident that the U. S. thought Indonesia's native politicians were smart enough to get along in a twentieth-century world, and they were anti-Communists. After Indonesia won its independence, we armed its federal police, to put down Communist guerrillas and other assorted insurgents, holdovers from the revolution.

It was in Indonesia that I learned I could not be a war correspondent. My agent in New York reported that none of my articles on Indochina sold. Editors thought I had not been objective, and I did not "convey the overall picture." The *Chicago Daily News*, apparently as a result of Weller's recommendation, offered me a trial, on a space basis. But the sight of wounded men still gave me violent stomach cramps and tortured my brain. I could write no more war stories.

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One day I threw aside my notebooks and sought some mental relief in the esoteric verse of Rilke. I studied him in both English and German, to make sure I would get poetical. A servant brought in a letter from Boston. Weller had heard of my "peculiar adventures in Cambodia with some sort of Tarzan in the French Foreign Legion" and thought I ought to come home. After a few days on Bali, I flew to Milwaukee, via New Guinea, Kwajalein, Honolulu, and Los Angeles.

My friends and relatives in Milwaukee astonished me with their lack of interest in what was going on in China, Korea, Indochina, and Indonesia. Naturally they preferred to gossip about mutual acquaintances and local politics, but that sort of conversation did not interest me any more. I missed the talk of foreign correspondents, gossiping about the generals and diplomats who were making decisions that, sooner or later, would touch most American families. I decided that whether I was good at it or not, foreign correspondence was the only job I wanted. But I had to admit I could not forget Weller. More than anything else, I wanted to marry him.

Weller kept a safe distance, living with an uncle in Boston. After a few weeks in Milwaukee, I went to live with my uncle in Little Neck, Long Island. Following American courtship habits, Weller was invited to a Little Neck week-end with my uncle, and then it was his turn to invite me to a proper Bostonian week-end, chaperoned by his uncle. Weller showed me the glories of New England, including the widow-walks where Yankee wives looked out to sea, year after year, faithfully waiting for their seafaring husbands to return from far-off lands. I fled back to Little Neck in a sudden fit of self-preservation and waited for Weller to get the Charlotte-on-a-widow-walk notion out of his head. I thought that with a little time and no pressure, Weller might come around to seeing that I was perfectly capable of being a traveling wife. Instead, he phoned long-distance to say good-bye. His editor considered him sufficiently rested and re-Americanized and wanted him to go to Europe immediately.

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"Where in Europe?" I asked.

"Eastern. Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Balkans. I'll be on the move all the time. See you when I get back."

"When?"

"I don't know."

Since Weller wasn't going to get the idea of a traveling wife all by himself, he would have to have a demonstration. I quickly rounded up a noncompetitive job as a correspondent for a women's news syndicate—no expenses, space rates—and flew to Prague in July 1947 for a World Youth Festival. Weller was there.

About 70,000 youths, including Mongolians, Europeans, Iranians, Egyptians, Brazilians, and Indochinese swarmed around the onion-domed churches of Prague and its medieval castles. At night they gathered around campfires to sing the *Internationale* and discuss "the enemies of the youth of the world" who were "American warmongers."

The international camp ground for the "World Federation of Democratic Youth" flew the flags of some forty nations. There the music of accordions and gypsy violins mingled with the romantic tinkling of Oriental xylophones. Russian peasant girls leaped and whirled in bucolic dances. Hungarian gymnasts somersaulted with precision and pointed toes. French, Italian, and British sang "songs of the people." The Yugoslavs were enlisting youth volunteers to build dams and roads for them—lodging, food, and transportation free. Only the Americans were grim. They wore dirty khaki shorts and told sourly about the bitter struggle of progressive young Americans under capitalist domination. The American exhibition consisted of a huge scaffold on which an effigy of an American Negro dangled from a lynching rope. The tourists and the federated youth of the world averted their eyes as they passed the American exhibition and went on to happier nations having a carnival.

Suddenly a small, crew-cut American turned up who thought the Prague Youth Festival was a "stinking deal" and

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he wanted to tell us how he "got rooked into it." At nineteen, Jim was a big man on a Midwestern campus with a talent for running college politics. One day he received a letter from the "American Youth for Democracy" inviting him as a youth leader to go to the Prague Festival, with all expenses paid.

"I have to work summers to keep myself in college," Jim said. "But my family thought I might never have another chance to see Europe. They offered to jack up the money somehow for my next year, so I went to New York and met the rest of the fifty so-called youth leaders who were chosen to go. Cripes, what a letdown! Have you seen those fat New York girls with their damn Communist pamphlets?"

We said we had.

"Well, I think lots of the fellows in the American delegation didn't know what the pitch was until they got on the boat. You know, most of the kids in the American delegation are the children of immigrants from Eastern Europe. That's why they grabbed at the chance to see how the Old Country was doing. If we're good and debunk our own country here, the commissars will take us to some other towns on the way home—Budapest, Warsaw, Bucharest, all semi-demi Communist places like that."

Jim told us that some of the American delegates were paying their own way and some had their way paid, depending on their "leadership qualities." He jerked a thumb at a nearby group of Australians, singing "Waltzing Matilda."

"Those guys are up-and-coming labor organizers who got free tickets here. They're not all Commies, either, but I bet they will be by the time they get home. Australians get a free ticket all around the world, practically." Jim assured us there were some young American labor leaders at the Youth Festival too, "studying Czech labor organization." We couldn't find them. We did find three American teen-agers who said they had never heard of the "American Youth for Democracy" until they got the bids for the free trip to Prague—through their home-town Y's and churches.



## *VI. East and West of Bangkok*

Diligent publicity shepherds, speaking all the world's languages, took the youth delegations down Prague's broad avenues to see the stores bursting with inexpensive clothes, shoes, food, and the luxuries of "advancing socialism." At kiosks they could buy New York papers and the best-known American news magazines. The organizers of the Youth Festival had chosen their city well; Prague was still a showcase for free thought and expression, with complete socialism.

The international youth were told that Czechoslovakia's booming prosperity was due to the organization of labor. Every industry employing 500 workers was nationalized and every childless woman and every man had to join a "work council" the day he turned eighteen. Colored diagrams showed exactly how the work councils pyramided up to Government policy-makers. "Every request of the workers goes up through channels," said a public relations officer.

"Never down from the Government to the workers?" asked Weller.

"Oh, no, orders never go down," was the reply. The kids stared and clucked disapprovingly at us for asking such un-socialist questions.

All the Czech newspapers panned the U. S. every day, but that was "popular expression," we were told. The theater was full of "cultural guidance and progressivism" due to "the determination to keep the peace."

I was raised under the timid socialism of Milwaukee, where honest, old, incorruptible Marxists explained their scripture to me as if it were the story of Jonah and the whale, something to be believed and not tried. Milwaukee socialists left even the city's transport system and public utilities in private hands, because they did a good job and were nothing to tinker with. Until I went to Czechoslovakia, I had the odd idea that all socialism was Milwaukee's kind. But standing on a lovely old bridge in Prague on a rainy Sunday afternoon, watching a girl work council rowing up and down the river to the count of a hefty lady commissar, I found social-

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ism meant something quite different, something appalling.

"We Czechs spend our Sundays on planned outings," explained a Youth-Festival public relations officer. "Planned outings build workers' solidarity."

Weller and I called on the Czech Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk, who talked to us in booming American slang. He had been married to an American bathroom-fixture fortune, and had spent some time in the States. Masaryk greeted us with hearty good humor.

"Hello, hello, hello. Sit down. Have a drink with me. Well, what do you think of Czechoslovakia?"

"Looks pretty prosperous," replied Weller.

"You're *Chicago Daily News*, aren't you? Does the Midwest think we deserve a helping hand or is it still isolationist?"

"We gave Czechoslovakia plenty of UNRRA aid," murmured Weller. "In exchange your Government pans us in its papers and plays host to a Communist outfit like this Youth Festival."

Masaryk kept his smile. "But we Czechs who still believe in the West must have something to indicate the West will not abandon us again. As it did at Munich. An awful lot of Czechs have not forgotten Munich, don't forget. We need something tangible to show that Americans are in back of the pro-West Czechs."

"What do you mean by tangible, Mr. Masaryk?"

"More American aid."

"Well, how about having Czechoslovakia doing something tangible indicating friendship to the U. S.?" asked Weller, trying to sound like a Middle Westerner though he had been to Chicago only three times in his life.

"We can't irritate those boys sitting on our borders. You know that," replied Masaryk. "Those boys" meant the Russians, encamped just a few miles from all Czechoslovakia's borders—in Hungary, in Southeastern Poland, in Roumania, and in Eastern Germany.

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Masaryk lunged his wrestler's body out of its deep leather armchair and walked over to his office bar to mix Scotch highballs. "Have a drink to Czechoslovakia," he said, raising his glass. His eyes were sparkling with vigor and humor. "Czechoslovakia will be the bridge between East and West," he added.

"Hope you don't get marched on again," Weller said.

"Well, call us the bridge between capitalism and Communism, then. We Czechs can do it. Want to bet?"

"No," said Weller. "I don't trust your Communists."

"Neither do I," said Masaryk.

Seven months later Masaryk plunged out of his window, a suicide, or a victim of the Communists. The Communist-led work councils pulled off a nearly bloodless revolution. But the federated youth of the world were not alarmed. Czechoslovakia was still socialist, not Communist, they argued. They had been there. They had heard the talk about "advancing socialism," not Communism. They had studied the diagrams of the organization of the work councils, with channels running up, never down. And then Czechoslovakia did not become a Communist state in any of the classic ways—because its people were hungry or unemployed or because the Russians invaded. The Russians stayed in their camps encircling Czechoslovakia, to make sure its socialism "advanced" and "traitors" could not get out. Old-fashioned socialists like Masaryk could go nowhere but to jail or death.



## VII

# Orient Express

WELLER and I left Czechoslovakia to travel around Poland for three weeks, then flew to Vienna. The Weisser Hahn Hotel had been converted into a U. S. Army press hostel, costing about three dollars a day, and I decided to settle there for a while. The women's news service I was working for didn't pay more than an average of fifty dollars a week, and I had to try writing magazine articles, too, in order to keep myself self-supporting.

One day in August 1947, the correspondents in the Weisser Hahn were talking about Nicolai Petkov as they disconsolately gulped their lunch of fried spam, fried potato pancakes, and fried apples-in-dough. Nicolai Petkov, I learned, was a popular Bulgarian farmer and politician who was a leader of the Green Revolution before the war. Now the Red Revolution had to get rid of him. The Bulgarians were handing out visas to any correspondents willing to attend Petkov's treason trial. I obtained a visa at the Bulgarian Legation in Vienna and flew off to Sofia the next morning.

The first things I noticed on Sofia's broad Boulevard Tsar Osvoboditel were the huge billboards advertising Bulgarian

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womanhood, before and after Communism. The outdated, pre-Communist girl was portrayed reclining on a sofa, with a cigarette drooping from her scarlet lips and a bottle labeled "whiskey" at her elbow. She looked drunk and thoroughly decadent. The adjacent picture showed the new Bulgarian Communist woman—a blonde, smiling Ingrid Bergman in overalls, marching with a pickaxe over her shoulder.

The front pages of Bulgaria's Communist newspapers told me more about the new ideal woman. She was a "shock worker" who surpassed the production norm. The articles carefully mentioned the number of marriage proposals a girl worker received once she reformed and increased her production. One paper said that Neda Illieva, a fat, straight-haired, brunette shock worker, showed the right attitude when she turned down the proposal of a handsome sailor with the words: "No, I want to marry a fellow shock worker." Apparently Bulgaria's sailors were not surpassing production norms.

Another day all the papers printed the picture of Mariika Stevanova, a "work heroine" who put her two children in a Government nursery while she went to work in the Government's "First of May" cotton-weaving plant at the Black Sea port of Varna. Thin-faced, plain-looking Mariika was a wearer of "The Golden Medal of Labor" and the "prototype of emancipated Bulgarian women," the papers said. Mariika was quoted as saying: "When I lived in my village no one knew me; today I am known all over Bulgaria."

A Government pamphlet addressed to the emancipated women of Bulgaria declared: "While many a juicy heiress of apartment houses has seen her sex appeal waste away and the buxom daughters of big landlords have been rendered less desirable by the agrarian reforms, the girl who has the energy and the knack to work runs little risk of suffering similar mishaps. The shock worker is the one who holds the hearts of Bulgarian men aflutter today. The men may not be indifferent to the extra wages, but what really attracts them

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is the efficiency displayed—usually a true index of a good wife.”

Shock-working was the surest way to get into the movies, too. Sofia's theaters showed films of work heroines demonstrating their flawless industrial techniques. Work Heroine Mariika Stevanova showed how she could manage twelve spools at a time, though the average textile worker could work only two spools at a time. The average two-spool worker was paid 280 levas a day, less than a dollar in American money. But Mariika earned 1,000 levas a day, “as well as special privileges such as extra clothing, and food rations, and the opportunity to buy at lower prices in Government stores.”

Magazines were full of pictures of work heroines relaxing in their factory dormitories, reading cultural literature. Some were photographed as they enjoyed paid vacations at “mineral spas formerly available only to the rich, but now the property of the Bulgarian state.”

My research into emancipated Communist womanhood was interrupted one evening by shouting in the street, outside my hotel. A crowd, mostly women, was marching past, bearing placards reading: “The people demand the death penalty for the traitor Petkov.” The orderly mob pushed toward a little park where a bonfire was burning. There an effigy labeled “Petkov” was dangling from a scaffold. “Down with Petkov, down with Petkov!” screamed the crowd. Someone cut the rope and Petkov's effigy fell into the fire. The flames hissed as they consumed the straw and the people stood by moodily. A feeble cheer was raised.

In the courtroom the next day, Nicolai Petkov sat in the docket. His hands trembled as he ran them through his disorderly gray hair, but his face was calm and bore a trace of cynicism as he kept his eyes on his defense attorney. Two of the three “people's judges” were in their early thirties. They were listening intently to an array of witnesses testify-

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ing that Petkov conspired with "Anglo-American imperialists."

But the trial had developed a hitch. Stubborn Petkov would not confess that he had conspired to overthrow Bulgaria's Communist Government. The "spontaneous demonstrations by the masses" had to be organized so that the judges would have to "bow to the will of the people," though they had no confession from the accused.

Petkov's father and brother had been assassinated years before, for fighting against Fascism in Bulgaria. Perhaps Petkov felt that since he would be condemned to death anyway, he would die in his fifty-sixth year with dignity and defiance, as a final salute to his family.

On his last day in court, Petkov rose and made a simple speech, affirming a man's right to think differently than his Government. He denied he had ever taken part in any conspiracy to turn his country over to a foreign power. "But I speak for all the farmers in Bulgaria in still opposing collectivization of the farms," he said.

Petkov's last words did not appear in Sofia's Communist newspapers and no interpreters were willing to translate them for foreigners. But his final speech is not entirely lost to the world. Bulgarian political exiles still quote snatches of it and laboriously fit together the few phrases that have been remembered. Every year on September 23, the anniversary of Petkov's hanging in Sofia prison, Bulgarians all over the world hold little ceremonies of commemoration and repeat his stirring last words. The Voice of America beams them back to Bulgaria every September 23, but nobody knows whether or not they are heard in Sofia.

Inasmuch as Petkov was willing to die defying collectivization, Weller and I thought we ought to find out why. We decided to take a ride and talk to some farmers. But in Communist Bulgaria it was first necessary to get permission to take a drive. Our precise route, village by village, was laid

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before the Ministry of the Interior. We wanted to have a picnic, we said, in the beautiful Bulgarian countryside. The Ministry of the Interior approved of our planned outing, but no interpreters were allowed to go with us.

We drove past fields of ripe wheat, being cut by peasants using old-fashioned sickles. Uniformed members of the Bulgarian militia patrolled the road. At every crossroads militiamen wrote down our license number in a notebook and waved us on. We stopped at a deserted clump of trees, bordering a stream, hauled out our picnic things, and stretched out on blankets. The Bulgarian militiamen smiled at us with international understanding and left us in privacy for about an hour.

We met some farmers. They told us in German that they were compelled to take all their wheat to Government-run threshing centers. Private threshing and night threshing were forbidden. The law was strictly enforced; one farmer who had sneaked out of his hut to sift a few handfuls of his wheat at night had been arrested and his land expropriated. All wheat had to go to the Government's Cereal Export Board. All eggs had to go to the Government's Egg Board for counting and selection. All oil from sunflowers and roses went to the Government's Fat Board. All tobacco went to the Government's Tobacco Monopoly. Farmers were not allowed to slaughter any of their pigs or sheep, because all slaughtering had to be done in Government abattoirs.

"We are paid very low prices for our crops and livestock, but they cost very dear in the cities. The Government Inspectors in our area are suddenly rich. Petkov knows what they are doing to us. Petkov is our leader and our spokesman," said a farmer.

There was a new ritual in Bulgaria. When Government Inspectors came to tell the farmers their production norms, the farmers gravely bowed and said: "Come in, sir, this house is yours, too." The Government Inspectors considered the remark a sign of compliance, but the farmers said it



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was their battle cry. "Petkov will be hanged as an example to us," said a farmer. "But not many of us are brave enough to die with him."

A few days later Bulgaria's Government publicity bureau invited American correspondents to take a trip to the country to see the magnificent work being done by Bulgaria's Communist youth. Weller, Walter Kerr of the *New York Herald Tribune*, Ned Roberts of the U. P., and I were piled into a comfortable American car with the prettiest interpreter in Sofia, a vivacious, black-haired girl with fine features who could speak beautifully in four languages. She told us we were bound for the "Georgi Dimitrov Dam," named for the President of Bulgaria. There the "Georgi Dimitrov Youth Brigade" was building a dam 2,600 feet long and 130 feet high.

When we arrived at the site we saw the Youth Brigade clawing out 140 million cubic feet of earth, so that the dam could be started. They had only one wheezing old compressor drill, picks, wheelbarrows, and shovels to do the job.

Girls and boys, aged from sixteen to twenty-one, slung their picks in rhythm and rolled away the wheelbarrows full of clay. The pretty Bulgarian publicity girl told us they were all "volunteers" paid from 320 to 520 levas a day, from one to two dollars in our money.

We picked out a stocky girl worker wearing the regulation blue shorts and shirt and asked if we could talk to her. She was sixteen years old and told us she worked for no pay whatever.

"This girl is typical of the spirit of the Bulgarian youth," interrupted the pretty interpreter.

"I volunteer three months' work every year for my fatherland," continued the girl worker. "Last summer I worked in a coal mine. Yes, also without pay, for my fatherland."

"About ten per cent of the 80,000 workers in the Bulgarian Youth Movement work without pay in the summers, for the fatherland," said the publicity girl.

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"You mean you have 80,000 youths working as volunteers?" I asked, incredulous.

The publicity girl smiled at me. "Anyone who is an idler or doing work of no social significance is sent to a labor camp," she replied.

We were shown the picture of the Georgi Dimitrov Youth Brigade Work Heroine, who voluntarily shoveled earth without pay at thirty per cent faster than the expected pace. "And this work heroine is not even a member of the Communist Party!" added the publicity girl. "She is being rewarded now with a paid vacation at a Government spa—everything paid—for two weeks."

The Georgi Dimitrov Youth Brigade also had a "recreation hall" where the youngsters attended political rallies, heard lectures on international affairs, and were given lessons in the Russian language.

As we drove back to Sofia, we looked for signs of the 100,000 Russian troops who were occupying Bulgaria as a result of her defeat in World War II. We saw no Russians—only an American lend-lease jeep which was delivering copies of *Drujba*, the Red Army newspaper.

"The Russians rarely appear in our cities," explained the Bulgarian girl. "They are very well behaved and if any Russian strays into a village café, the law forbids his being served. There is no fraternization here in order to keep good relations between the civilians and soldiers."

Weller said some complimentary things about the discipline of Russian soldiers in Bulgaria, and then innocently asked who their commander was.

"We had General Sergei Biruzov," answered the publicity girl. "He is the best troop trainer the Red Army has. But he has been sent to North Korea now."

One afternoon Weller and I strolled past Sofia's Russian Orthodox churches, exquisite little jewel-boxes with gilded onion domes. They were open but empty, except for a few old widows in black, praying before ikons and vigil lights.

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Near by we came upon an open-air market with stalls displaying Bulgarian peasant handicraft—black caracul hats, handstitched suede coats lined with sheepskin, crude leather purses, homemade soap, and copper pots. I wondered why the farmers had to sell all their produce to Government outlets, but these vendors could still have a free market on the streets of the capital.

"These little merchants are no problem to the Government," replied Weller. "But the farmers of Bulgaria have been a political force for a long time. They farm their own land and they want to hold onto it."

We bargained for a fine caracul hat for me, costing one dollar. Then we moved on to the suede coats, costing eight dollars. I was trying one on when a little man sidled up to Weller and spoke in rapid French.

"Last night someone sneaked into the cemetery and laid a wreath of fresh flowers on the Petkov family tomb," he said.

"Is Petkov already executed?" asked Weller.

"I don't know," replied the Bulgarian impatiently. "But that is not the point. The point is that someone here had enough courage to risk arrest to honor him. That wreath is a symbol. Don't you understand?" He slipped among the shoppers, out of sight.

As we walked out that marketplace, a woman whispered "Americans" and made the V for Victory sign. The other vendors were busily arranging their wares, but the fingers of their right hands were formed in the V for Victory. We hurried back to the hotel and took our baggage to the railway station before any more courageous Bulgarians risked arrest by making symbols at two Americans.

The *Orient Express* jerked past Svilengrad, through acres of sunflowers turning their golden faces eastward. A white-turreted castle on a hill dominated the valley cut by the Maritza River. It looked like a setting for an operetta to me. Weller glanced at a map laid out on the seat behind him.

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"Good guerrilla country, you notice." I looked at the craggy mountains, covered with scrubby trees. Weller told me guerrilla fighters were raiding over the Bulgarian frontier, into Greece. "The Bulgarians want a Communist Greece and an outlet to the sea through Greece. Naturally the Russians would like that, too; then they could have the use of a warm-water port on the Aegean."

I wandered down the corridors of the *Orient Express*, looking for suitable characters to fit this international plot. First class was empty, except for a gray-haired, round-bellied American diplomatic courier who was reading about the life and loves of Frank Harris. I decided not to disturb him.

A woman veiled in black sat in a second-class compartment alone. I slid open the door but she did not turn her head. She continued to look out the window through her thick—extra thick—black veil. Black hairs curled from the knuckles of her hands. Her feet were broad and very large, and her ankles were hidden under heavy, wrinkled, black wool stockings. She kept her arms folded over her chest. I decided she was a man. She or he completely ignored my attempts to start a conversation.

This was the first summer of postwar guerrilla skirmishes in the Balkans, and the Paris–Lausanne–Milan–Trieste–Belgrade–Sofia–Istanbul *Orient Express* carried no other international passengers.

As the train screeched to a stop at the Bulgarian-Greek-Turkish frontier, the peasants in third class clambered out, hoisting heavy bundles wrapped in blankets.

"I wonder if there is a machine gun inside that blanket," murmured Weller, his eyes on a tall Bulgarian peasant who was carrying a load on his shoulder. Four other peasants fell into step behind him. The *Orient Express* picked up speed and crossed the frontier into the rolling, peaceful fields of Turkey, yellowish green with ripening tobacco.

For arrival by rail, Istanbul is laid out in time sequence.

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First the train passes through the city of Constantine, alongside the crumbling aqueduct built by Roman colonists. Then you spot the mosques and minarets, harems and palaces of the sultans. We got off to look at the Great Bazaar crowded with merchants, thousands of them—loud, individualistic, uncollectivized. The Blue Mosque was full of worshippers, prostrate, with their foreheads touching the faded prayer rugs on the floor. We crossed the Galata Bridge, spanning the arm of the Golden Horn, to modern Istanbul. Its people were vigorous and unafraid, neither despairing nor complacent, though the breezes that cooled them came from the Russian steppes. To prove that we had, indeed, left Communism behind, we drove along the Bosphorus to look at Robert College, an American landmark, high on a cliff above the torrents that come pouring out of the Black Sea. It was still open to students of the Middle East, teaching American philosophies and sciences. Before Communism came to Bulgaria, Sofia had had an American college, too; now it was locked and deserted, condemned for teaching heresy.

Being correspondents, we couldn't stay in Turkey, a country that was united and strong in optimism, untroubled by trials of "traitors," Communist guerrilla armies in the countryside, or Russian occupation. We had to head for a battle-front and front-page stories again. Greece was the obvious spot, having suffered continuous guerrilla operations since 1741.

First the Greek Partisans fought the Nazi and Italian invaders. Then Greeks fought Greeks in a civil war. Now, in September 1747, the Greek Army was fighting Greek Communists and their new friends all along Greece's borders touching Communist Albania, Communist Yugoslavia, and Communist Bulgaria. We boarded another *Orient Express*, the one connecting Istanbul with Salonika, and slipped out of Turkey. Again there were no international passengers,

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only peasants in third-class coaches, sitting beside their huge bundles wrapped in blankets.

We were only a few miles inside Greece when the train shuddered and ground to a halt, throwing us out of our seats. Weller jumped out, dragging me behind. The track was blown about twenty feet ahead of us and this *Orient Express* could go no farther. Weller bent over the twisted rails and picked up a piece of dynamite-wrapping with Cyrillic letters on it.

"Look, made in Bulgaria. Even says so."

The few peasants who were aboard the train scattered, running. The engineer and fireman in the locomotive babbled excitedly.

"What do we do now?"

"Walk." Weller was cheerful about it. He had been a correspondent in Athens for many years and he loved every inch of Greece. He hauled our suitcases out of the train and consulted his map. "Kavalla is only about 130 miles from here. Come on. If Alexander the Great could walk from here to India, you can walk from here to Kavalla."

We started out, carrying our heavy suitcases. No one was working in the neat fields of overripe tobacco. The warm, sunny September afternoon had an unnatural stillness. After half an hour, a wheezy American truck, full of Greek soldiers appeared out of a cloud of yellow dust. Weller flagged them to a stop and told them the *Orient Express* track was blown.

"It will be getting dark soon. We had better not go near. Perhaps guerrillas are waiting there to ambush us," said a sergeant. He invited us aboard the truck and turned around, headed for a "safe place." The driver swerved over the road, avoiding pits. "He's afraid of mines," confided the sergeant. "But you never know you hit a mine until it is too late, so there is no need to worry."

We drove into the village of Sterno at sunset. Women and children wearing black sat on the ground in the central square, their eyes red from weeping.

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"What happened here?" asked Weller, breaking the awkward silence.

"Guerrillas raided a couple of nights ago and kidnapped every male over the age of fourteen for the Greek Communist Army. The guerrillas took them off to Bulgaria."

Nothing moved in Sterno, except a couple of blindfolded oxen walking round and round a well, unmindful of their predecessors who had done the same work in the same spot for 2,000 years. The dazed women watched the oxen draw up buckets of water and spill the contents into sluices leading to the surrounding tobacco fields.

"There were eighty-three men and boys in Sterno only three days ago," whispered the sergeant. "But no one in Sterno will ever see them again."

"Tell us what happened," Weller said.

"The guerrillas sneaked into Sterno about this time, at sunset, when the men and boys were coming back from the fields for their supper. The guerrillas slipped into every house, gagged the women and bound them. As each man or boy crossed his threshold he was snatched and carried off. We soldiers didn't know anything about it until the next morning, when we stopped here on our routine patrol. By then it was too late to chase the kidnappers. We knew they would be over the frontier, inside Bulgaria." Weller pulled out his map and the soldier traced his stubby finger along a new road in Bulgaria, built by a Youth Brigade, paralleling the Greek frontier.

"Now the Sterno men will be put into trucks and taken along this road to Communist indoctrination camps. Later they will be forced into the Greek Communist Army," continued the sergeant. "They will either fight for the Communists or they will be shot."

As it grew dark, a heavy woman motioned me inside her stone house and pointed to a small cot. I could use it for the night. That was where her sixteen-year-old son had slept until three nights before. Without undressing, the Greek

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woman flopped on the near-by double bed she had shared with her husband and moaned in an agony of hopeless loneliness.

In the morning, the soldiers drove us to Komotini, a Greek Army Headquarters. The General, a voluble, black-haired whirlwind, carrying a pistol and three fountain pens, pumped Weller's hand up and down. "So you are from Chicago paper? Welcome, welcome. I am very glad to see you. I am related by marriage to the owner of the Aragon Ballroom." Weller assured the General that the Aragon was a very fine place. The Greek threw back his head and laughed.

"You write about me, Mr. Weller. Then one day my relatives in Chicago will pick up the paper and—ha, ha, ha, imagine their surprise to read all about their relative who is a general in Greece." He pounded Weller on the back and stood in the sun, in a very military attitude. "Take my picture, Mr. Weller. Send it to your paper." The General gave us the use of his best jeep, loaned us a driver, and sped us on to Salonika.

All the villages of Thrace and Macedonia were a manless world where the women worked the fields by day and sat alone in their huts at night, afraid to use a light for fear it would attract guerrillas. Their menfolk loitered in bigger towns, garrisoned by Greek troops, to evade being recruited by the Communists. We bumped over mined roads for three days, through villages pockmarked with the scars of guerrilla fighting, past flocks of scrawny goats scrambling among the cacti looking for food. Once we paused to listen to a shepherd playing a simple melody on a flute.

"He is a fool announcing his presence like that," said our driver. Then he had an afterthought. "Perhaps he is a Communist who hopes we will listen to him play, so that snipers can shoot us." The jeep lunged forward and we careened over the mountain road, not stopping any more. Finally we dropped down to the purple bay of Salonika.

"This place means much to me," Weller said, as we walked



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along the quay. "I was here in April 1741, when the Germans were advancing from Bulgaria. The gasoline dumps in Salonika were being blown up then, and the town was dark with smoke. I got out aboard a Greek caique, four hours before the Germans marched in."

Weller seldom reminisced with me. He was a war correspondent when I was still in journalism school and stories of his past adventures emphasized the eleven-year difference in our ages. The Nazi advance through Europe was a vivid personal experience to Weller; to me it was only a vague recollection of black banner headlines spread across a newspaper. Talk of the Nazi legions made Weller feel that we belonged to different generations.

As the Salonika-Athens boat pulled away from the quay, a Greek woman on the shore shouted at her husband aboard the ship. Everybody laughed with delight. Weller explained that the Greek wife was telling her departing husband exactly what she would cut off if he saw his Athenian mistress again. The husband and wife waved good-bye to each other with bright-red handkerchiefs until darkness closed in.

"When are we going to get married?" I asked, absentmindedly putting my thoughts into words.

Weller shot me a bachelor's look of fear. "I will not be challenged," he replied and scrambled down the ladder of the hold marked "Men Only."

Alone on deck, I contemplated Ulysses' wine-dark sea and wondered if he would accept the challenge if I threw myself into it.

By dawn he had recovered enough to join me on deck with a pair of binoculars. In a new, cold, professorial tone he pointed out Aulis, where 1200 Greek ships sailed to Troy "because of that faithless wife called Helen." Then we sighted the white cliffs of the island of Makronesi "where the troublesome Helen was taken after the Trojan War." Weller added that Makronesi was now a prison island, for Greek Communists.

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When we rounded the headland of Sunion, with silver waves splashing under the ancient marble temple to Poseidon, Weller laughed with happiness.

"Every time I pass this temple, headed for Athens, I have an odd feeling I am coming home," he said. "I suppose the old Athenians felt that way, too. They always stopped their galleys here, to offer thanks to Poseidon, when they were returning from the wars."

Athens was full of Americans—the military instructors, administrators, road engineers, and diplomats who would put the Truman Doctrine into effect, and save Greece from the Communist guerrillas. Weller learned that he had won a Nie-man Fellowship for a year's study at Harvard, and he was leaving for Boston within a few days. I kept my eyes away from his, afraid they might challenge him again.

One evening George Polk of C. B. S. asked Weller to be best man at his wedding. He introduced us to his pretty Greek fiancée, Reah, an educated, pliant girl who spoke beautiful English, French, and Arabic.

"We're having a small Greek Orthodox ceremony," Polk said. "Then we'll honeymoon at Kiphissia. I have to stay within telephone communication of Athens, in case I have to make a broadcast." It was the kind of correspondent's marriage, snatched between guerrilla skirmishes and political crises, that I thought I would have. Reah told me she had met Polk aboard an airplane, when she was a stewardess. The courtship had been brief, only three weeks.

"How long have you known your George?" Reah asked me.

"Nearly two years." Reah was a sensitive, well-bred girl. She instantly changed the subject.

The best man at a Greek Orthodox marriage ceremony has a complicated job. Weller had to hold wreaths of white blossoms over Reah's head and Polk's head, and then switch them, as the priest uttered the words of union. The few friends in the incense-filled church watched Polk, the thin, blond, ex-Navy fighter pilot who had been shot down twice

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in the Solomon Islands, take the hand of the loving Greek girl who could give him the comfort and peace he needed. Polk had spent a lot of time in hospitals, recovering from his wartime injuries; his first marriage had ended in divorce, and he had missed much happiness. Reah lived as a commuter between her divorced mother in Cairo and her lonely father in Athens. Her face under the white veil looked serious and pleading, and her body under the white satin wedding dress seemed to be trembling. Polk wore a little smile of confidence. He looked wonderful in the navy-blue suit he had borrowed from his best man. After the ceremony we ate sugar-coated almonds, symbols of fertility, and then waved the newlyweds off to the suburb of Kiphissia. "They are going to be very happy," said Reah's father.

Eight months later Polk tried to arrange an interview with the Greek Communist guerrilla leaders. His bloated body, with a bullet in the head, was found floating in Salonika Bay.



## VIII

# Holy Land

IN THE fall of 1747 foreign correspondents were heading for Palestine. The Jewish underground army, the terrorist gangs, and the British occupation army were fighting there. It was rumored that the British would give up their mandate over Palestine and hand the problem of the new Jewish homeland in a predominantly Arab country to the United Nations. I hoped to avoid war correspondence and, instead, write human interest stories about the Jews arriving by the thousands to make Palestine their new Israel. I flew from Athens to Lydda airport and arrived at Jerusalem's press hostel at dawn. A party had just ended and some of the guests were still draped over the living-room chairs. I backed out and asked the Arab taxi driver to take me to a "clean, quiet place." He deposited me at Jerusalem's "American Colony," a white stone inn on a quiet side street, run by American and Swedish missionaries.

The Colony had an inner court of palms and geraniums that looked like a cloister garden. The rooms were spotless and conventlike, supplied with Bibles. The American Colony seemed just the place to forget about Weller, who was now studying international law at Harvard, writing a novel about

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Greece, and playing center on the Adams House football team with undergraduates half his age.

A few days after I checked in at the Colony, Henry Wallace came to Palestine as a guest of Jewish political leaders. It was said Wallace would be a candidate for President of the United States in the 1948 elections. He needed the liberal Jewish vote and the Zionists needed American Government funds. It was immediately apparent that Wallace believed in Zionism. At Jerusalem's Wailing Wall, the site of the temple of Solomon, he stood beside the rabbis and bowed his head as if in prayer. My eyes kept wandering to the Arabs, standing near by with frowns on their faces. I couldn't keep from wondering what would happen to the site of Solomon's temple, now a mosque revered by Muslims, if the United Nations decided to partition the Palestine mandate into a Jewish and an Arab state.

Wallace knew much of the Old Testament by heart, and he quoted it at the Dead Sea, at Jericho, and at Beersheba, where Abraham dwelt and dug large wells. We were shown wide, deep wells outside of the town—"perhaps the very ones Abraham dug."

Wells and water are an obsession in the Holy Land. Zionist public relations officers told us repeatedly that the soil of Palestine is not hopeless; it needs only water. To prove it, they took us deep in the Negev desert, to the Jewish farm settlements that looked like forts, surrounded by barbed wire. Wallace inspected fields of his own brand of hybrid corn, planted in the sandy soil by the Zionists. He loved to touch the crops and pitch hay. But at one *kibbutz*, he also asked to see the books.

He added up the cost of the land, purchased from Arabs, the cost of the barns, community mess hall, community laundry, community kitchen, the school, nursery, and playground. Everybody in that *kibbutz* over sixteen, men and women alike, worked without pay for eight hours a day with

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an idealism and an energy that could not be measured in dollars. They had no personal belongings whatever. The *kibbutz* furnished them with a simple room, filling meals of stew, two suits of work clothes, and one suit of Sabbath clothes. Nevertheless, without even estimating what the labor was worth, Wallace figured it cost about sixty cents to produce one egg there.

"You see why we need American help so desperately," said a Zionist public relations officer at Wallace's elbow. Wallace nodded, but for the first time in a week his face bore a trace of uncertainty. As we left that *kibbutz*, bound for another, I asked Wallace what he thought of farming in the Holy Land.

"It's not exactly farming," he replied. "It's what Tom Dewey does in Pawling, New York." Then, embarrassed, he added that Dewey's farming was not meant to be economic; it had a political purpose.

A public relations man told Wallace that the Zionists hoped to settle 15 per cent of the people on the land. All the correspondents mercifully avoided asking what the other 85 per cent would do. Seven Arab nations had just threatened to boycott anything produced by Zionists in Palestine.

The Zionists deluged us with statistics, plans, and maps showing how they would irrigate with the waters of the Jordan. Then we moved north, to see the sites of the dams, sluices, and canals that would be built if the United Nations agreed the Zionists could have most of Palestine.

I know nothing about engineering, and the plans made no sense to me. I stared at the Jordan, almost dry at that time of the year. It looked as if I could wade across it. "If you divert what water there is, won't the Arab lands be dry?" I asked.

The Zionist public relations officer turned his face away and did not answer. He had been born in Palestine and he had told me many times that his Arab neighbors were his friends.

"You might have a war over the waters of the Jordan," I persisted, hoping to draw him out.

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Again there was no answer. He led me to a marsh where we boarded a flat-bottomed boat. Mosquitoes hummed around us as we pushed through bluish-green reeds more than six feet high. "Israel will drain this malarial bog," said the public relations officer. "It will make fine farm land." The marsh seemed to stretch for miles.

"How much will draining this puddle cost?"

"Probably a fantastic amount of money," said the public relations officer cheerfully. "I haven't seen the latest estimates." He pushed aside some of the reeds blocking our boat. "I guess these are the sort of thing Moses was hidden in. The ancient Jews made papyrus out of these things. Our archaeologists found a Jewish document written on papyrus the other day. They think it might be about 4,000 years old."

The Wallace caravan moved to the cities, to see the small industries, and the products the Zionists hoped to export. In Tel Aviv, Wallace was asked to address a large group of labor leaders. He had been traveling from dawn to darkness for two weeks and had had no time to prepare his speech. But at the banquet that night he rose with a sheaf of papers in his hand. His cowlick fell over his forehead, he shuffled, and read the words with moving sincerity. The correspondents listening to him gasped with surprise. The speech contained a few complimentary remarks about the Soviet Union and its labor organizations. The Tel Aviv labor leaders cheered.

Wallace read on, though he noticed the American correspondents scribbling in their notebooks. After the speech they cornered Wallace.

"Did you read that speech before you delivered it?" they asked.

"No," replied Wallace. "I usually do but—"

"Would you have deleted parts about Russia if you had read it before you delivered it?"

Wallace gave us a tired smile. "That is certainly an iffy question."

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"Who wrote that speech for you, Mr. Wallace?"

He didn't answer.

"Why the hell don't you correspondents lay off that speech?" asked a young American Zionist who had come with Wallace from the U. S. and seemed to be acting as his secretary.

"Anything Mr. Wallace says about Russia is news, inasmuch as he is a candidate for president," replied outspoken Phil Potter of the *Baltimore Sun*.

"Mr. Wallace's candidacy has not been decided," said the young secretary firmly.

"Who's going to decide it?" shot back Potter.

Wallace pushed out of the room, frowning. The young man followed him out.

"You two sure are touchy about who writes those pro-Russian speeches," commented Potter. The young secretary turned around and glared at him. We decided that he probably had written Wallace's speech. From then on Potter clung to the young secretary like a leech. He had a theory that he was one of the people who would decide Wallace's candidacy. "And I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he turned out to be a Communist," Potter told me.

When I returned to Jerusalem, after Wallace left Palestine, bombs were exploding in the streets. Hand grenades perforated the buses, both Arab and Jewish. The United Nations had voted for the partition of Palestine and the state of Israel was born.

The male correspondents patrolled the city in British armored cars, writing firsthand accounts of the fighting, now between Arabs and Jews. But I discovered I got good play in American newspapers with my feature stories about how the battles were affecting families in the *kibbutzim*, and what the new Jewish and Arab administrations were doing to marriages. Under the British, all Palestine's family affairs—marriage, divorce, and inheritance—were decided by eleven different kinds of religious courts, according to religious laws.



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Some 4,000 British soldiers and civilians who had married Palestine girls suddenly learned one morning that they were no longer legally bound. These stories, to my pleasant surprise, put my by-line on some front pages.

Israel's political leaders who tried to codify family laws suitable to a modern state ran headlong into opposition from the Orthodox Jewish community. According to the strictest Orthodox Hebrew law, any marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew was not valid. Yet a rabbinical court decided that, if a woman was pregnant, she was in fact married to the father of the child. Oriental Jews were allowed more than one wife at a time, but European Jews were not. Muslims were legally polygamous and there were numerous cases of Christian men who were unable to obtain a divorce in their own religious court and therefore turned Muslim in order lawfully to marry a second time. These stories apparently interested American readers more than accounts of bomb-throwing, skirmishes, and interviews with underground leaders of the Jewish and Arab troops.

All the correspondents were busy asking Arab and Jewish political leaders whether they believed the new state of Israel would have to fight the Arabs in neighboring countries, as well as the Arabs in Palestine. I wondered how educated, sophisticated Arabs, who had lived in Palestine for generations, felt about an anachronism like a "holy war." One day I was invited to tea by the five pretty daughters of Sheikh Hussan Eddin Jerallah, a prominent Arab living in Jerusalem.

One of the Sheikh's daughters, Raida, a beautiful red-headed girl who was studying for her Ph.D. in Muslim history, opened the conversation by saying softly: "We Arabs must fight. It would be dishonorable to accept the carving of our country by foreigners. We may lose but we must fight anyway. Even if we all die."

I was so startled by her words that I spilled my tea, but her four sisters—Saida, Wafieh, Nafeesa, and Zahida—plac-

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idly nodded in agreement. Nafeesa, a teacher of classical Arabic in Jerusalem's Women's Teachers' Training School, passed me a platter of tea cakes and added: "When Mohammed, on whom God's blessings be, went to his battles, the women discarded their veils to cook, to nurse, to carry drinks of water to the soldiers in the front lines. They fought, too. Arab women will do the same this time."

"Aisha, the beloved wife of the Prophet, is our example," Raida added. "Aisha took up the sword and led an army of 10,000 men against the Caliph Ali. She could do this thing because she knew in her heart she was right."

"As we know we are right to fight for our country against invasion by Jews from all over the world," put in Saida, a professional welfare worker.

"I shall be a nurse in this war," declared eighteen-year-old Wafieh, the youngest. "A new training school has just opened to teach Muslim women how to tend wounded. Already sixty girls are enrolled. Yes, the new nursing school was started for the war over Palestine. Of course there will be an all-out war here. Why do you doubt it?"

The neighboring kingdom of Jordan had the strongest Arab army—trained, officered, and equipped by the British. Some of our Zionist friends thought the British officers would hold the Arab Legion in check. Others thought the Arab Legion would answer the call of the Arabs in Palestine for a "holy war."

Potter and I decided to stop guessing what the Arab Legionnaires would do and ask them, instead. We hired a taxi to take us to the kingdom of Jordan, only about thirty miles away across the river.

Potter was unique among foreign correspondents. He was still happily married to his first wife and managed to help raise two children despite his junkets around the world. Potter considered himself an authority on marriage and handed out advice freely to anyone in a less fortunate position.

"Write Weller a nice, sweet letter every day for two weeks,

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and then stop," Potter advised. "Every time the mailman comes with no letter from you, Weller will have to worry—are you wounded, or have you gone underground with the Stern Gang, or have you just fallen for someone else. Writing every day and then stopping without giving any reason is known as the Mrs. Potter Method. It works—that's how my wife got me. That's how she keeps me, too."

We drove across the Allenby Bridge and into Jordan, through a city of tents. Potter ordered the driver to stop and we clambered out, expecting to find the Arab Legion. Instead, we discovered the tents were full of Oriental Jews from the bazaars of Damascus, Baghdad, Aleppo, and Tehran. They were waiting for new Israel to invite them in. While they waited, their skillful fingers were busy, making shoes, sewing fine lambskins into fur coats, working with precious metals and jewels over charcoal braziers. Several of these Oriental Jews had more than one wife and most of them were dressed like Arabs, in long, loose robes of thin brown wool. We wondered how they would get along in modern Israel, with its new tide of polished, Western-educated officials from England, Canada, South Africa, and the U. S.

The taxi took us on to Amman, the capital of the Kingdom of Jordan. There we found the Philadelphia Hotel full of well-behaved wives and children of British Army officers, having tea. Their husbands, said the wives, were "off on maneuvers."

Jordan's new Parliament, guided by British political advisers, met the next morning. There was a carved wooden throne, made in England, for King Abdu'llah when he opened the sessions. Arab sheikhs in white headdresses, with little gold-braid crowns, shouted from their polished oak benches in the best Western parliamentary tradition. Neither Potter nor I could understand Arabic and we could find no one willing to translate the speeches for us. But we noticed that the sheikhs occasionally turned around to glare at the

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Americans sitting in the gallery. I thought the Jordanian Parliament might be registering its indignation at having a bare-faced woman, shamelessly exposing thirteen inches of leg from the hem of her skirt, defiling the premises. All the Arab women I had seen on the streets of Amman were heavily veiled in black and nothing of their faces or figures could be seen. I left the Parliament and watched the Arab women saunter through a near-by bazaar.

I could see only their slender ankles, clad in sheer black nylon. Most of the ladies wore high-heeled, black patent-leather sandals. Their outer robes were dusty black cotton, but the women were not buying street clothes that morning. They fingered bolts of brilliant silk and brocade. When they wanted to inspect a color, they flipped up their veils and then dropped them again, in one shutterlike movement. I spied pretty lips, painted with lipstick.

There were no women employees in any of Amman's shops or cafés, but the women joked with the male shopkeepers. Many of the lady customers sat in the shops, smoking without setting their veils on fire, and sipping tiny cups of coffee. Red nail polish and French imported perfume seemed to be the fastest-selling items in Amman's bazaar that day. I decided Arab husbands were generous, anyway.

The next day was Friday, the Muslim Sabbath, and we heard the *muezzins* calling to the faithful from the minarets. Evidently there was a fiery sermon in the mosque that morning, because when the men came out, they marched through the streets, shouting and brandishing anything they could lay hands on. Potter and I skirted the marchers by walking through the ruined Roman temple on Amman's main street, and joined the rear of the parade. Ahead of us an Arab youth carried a meat cleaver, and screamed denunciation of Americans. He was so busy he didn't turn around to see the two Americans following him. A bearded, black-robed mullah, a Muslim priest, mounted one of the broken pillars of the temple and made a hoarse speech. The crowd grew more excited.

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Potter and I decided we had seen enough and skittered back to the safety of the hotel.

At teatime, an Arab businessman joined us on the veranda of the Philadelphia and told us that the only other Americans in town, two teachers in a missionary school, had barricaded themselves behind the iron gates of their residence. The businessman was a little apologetic about the anti-American demonstrations in Jordan that day.

"The people think Americans are responsible for the United Nations' giving most of Palestine to the Jews," he said.

"And they are right," replied Potter, the Lincolnesque, honest-rail-splitter type. The Arab looked at Potter curiously, not used to such frankness.

"In Parliament here yesterday, the sheikhs said we have to fight Israel before it gets stronger, otherwise the Jews will come ~~here~~, too. Their King David once captured Amman, you know. Perhaps the Zionists think that gives their new Israel the right to Amman, too."

Potter suggested that it might be smarter for the Arabs to wait and see, instead of fighting a stupid "preventive war." The Arab laughed bitterly.

"The Jews are smarter than we Arabs," he said. "We know that. We also know they are international and organized and they can beat us in any negotiations in the United Nations. Perhaps they cannot beat us in a fight, though."

We watched skeikhs driving by in shining new convertibles, their white headdresses floating behind them, looking like Valentinos on wheels. They didn't seem like the scourge of the desert any more. Veiled Jordanian ladies walked the streets, in groups of twos and threes, like nuns. I thought of Goldie Myerson, a former U. S. citizen from Milwaukee, preparing for her new job in the first Israeli Cabinet. Some Zionists said Mrs. Myerson might some day be President of Israel. It was hard to believe women like Goldie Myerson lived only a few hours' drive away.

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Suddenly the hotel clerk came out on the veranda. "Please, Americans, go somewhere else," he implored. "There is a mob coming here. Two tank trucks of an American oil company have been burned. Now maybe the mob is looking for you." His tone was agitated and his black eyes looked past us. "I am very, very sorry," he added, "but you must get off these premises." The Arab who had been talking to us excused himself and went into the hotel. We figured that being seen with Americans at such a time might hurt his business. We could hear the mob now, a dull roar, like surf. We jumped to our feet and started considering places to hide. We rejected under a bed or in a toilet room as too undignified. A slim, sandy-haired British Major came out on the veranda and listened a few moments to the shouting of the crowd coming down the street. He turned to us.

"Get into that armored car," he said, pointing to a vehicle parked in the hotel's front yard. "Get out of sight." We ran to the armored car and crouched down on the bottom of it, feeling ridiculous. The Major returned within a few minutes and threw us odds and ends of uniform picked up in the hotel lobby.

"Put these on. Quickly. You've got to get out of town." I tucked my hair under a British Signal Corps beret and put on an Artillery lieutenant's jacket. The Major wiped the lipstick off my mouth, jumped into the driver's seat, and started the car with a deafening roar. I looked at Potter. He was now dressed as a sergeant-major in the British Army. We lay on the floor of the armored car until we thought we must be out of Amman. Then Potter tapped the Major on the shoulder.

"Where are you taking us?"

"Allenby Bridge," the Major yelled back. We drove on for a few miles and then spied a truck ahead, full of spike-helmeted soldiers of the Arab Legion. The Major slowed down and turned to us.

"Steady, now," he said. "The Arabs will think you are British and you'll be all right." I glanced down at my high-heeled

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pumps and started scratching the pink polish off my nails. It was no use; I couldn't possibly be mistaken for a British soldier. I flopped down on the floor of the car. The Major turned around and poked me.

"There's a roadblock ahead and I have to stop. Sit up like a little man." The Major seemed to be enjoying himself.

We sat up with military rigidity and surveyed the road ahead of us, piled high with rocks. About a dozen unshaven Arabs in dirty headdresses and raggy brown robes were jabbering to the Arab Legion soldiers in the truck. Our Major leaned out of our car and uttered a few well-chosen words in Arabic. The Arabs saluted, removed the blocks from the road, and we passed the truck, blowing our horn in a jolly little signal. A mile further on the Major cut the motor and turned to us.

"The Arabs at that roadblock said they were looking for Americans. Did you notice they had hand grenades? They said there are roadblocks posted all the way from here to the Allenby Bridge, to make sure no Americans can get out of the country." The Major calmly lit a pipe and surveyed the desert. "I'll take you to Zerqa. Hold onto your hats. We'll skip the roads and ride across the desert a while."

"Where the hell is Zerqa?" Potter asked.

The Major waved his right arm toward the empty horizon. "Over there. It's Arab Legion Headquarters. But it is north of Amman and we are south of it, so I'll have to make a wide detour." The Major started the car again. We drove over the dry, caked desert and skidded down innumerable dry river beds. Potter and I were peppered with pebbles and covered with fine sand.

"I hope he knows what he's doing," Potter said. "Well, anyway, spending the night with the Arab Legion will be one hell of a story. Seems like old times, doesn't it?" After Potter and I had been in the custody of the Russians in Manchuria, his paper had given him a bonus.

Bedouin tribes, tending their flocks of goats and camels,

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waved at us as we rode by. The tribeswomen, unlike the city women of Jordan, did not wear veils. They walked proudly, balancing jars of water on their heads, and they clanked with their dowries of heavy silver coins, strung around their necks. Men and boys were busy dismantling black goatskin tents and loading copper cooking pots onto the backs of camels standing in an attitude of disdainful conceit. The Major explained that the Jordanian tribes were getting ready for their annual migration south, to winter pastures in Arabia.

When we hit a point in the desert well north of Amman, the Major turned onto a highway and sped through adobe settlements, full of blond women, men, and children. I asked if the blonds were descendants of T. E. Lawrence's Desert Raiders.

"My God, no!" expostulated the Major. "They are descendants of Muslim Circassians and Armenians who fled from Czarist Russia about seventy years ago." He muttered something about "stupid scribblers who write about Arabs without having a clue." A moment later the Major slowed the car, turned around, and gave me a lecture.

"The Arabs are extremely civilized people in some ways. I am going to put you under the protection of an Arab sheikh who also happens to be an officer in the Arab Legion. He will give you hospitality and under the Arab code you will be protected while you are under his roof. Only Allah knows why." He stepped on the gas and then had an afterthought.

"Arab men lock up their women at night and keep a close watch on them by day. Damned fine idea."

We drove through the mud-walled shops of Zerqa with the Major waving salaams to the merchants sitting on the yellow-dust ground. Outside the town was a vast encampment of white tents, military horses, camels, trucks, jeeps, armored cars, and a few tanks. The Major stopped the car.

"Please remove your British Army uniforms," he said. "It would not do to have the commanding officer here see you in



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such unorthodox dress. He would have nightmares for a week."

We drove into a neat yard of oleander bushes, framing a white stucco bungalow. The commanding officer of Zerqa was standing on his front steps, wearing white flannel slacks and a striped blazer, and carrying a tennis racquet. As our friend explained how we happened to be in Zerqa, a little smile of amusement played around the corners of the Colonel's mouth. Then he sent his bat-boy to fetch Sheikh somebody-or-other for a discussion of what was to be done with us.

The Sheikh appeared in a few minutes, wearing a pressed, sand-colored gabardine uniform and a polished pistol holder. Except for his white headdress and the little gold-braid crown, he could be mistaken for a tanned European. The Sheikh glanced at us and then turned his attention to the Colonel. After a long discussion in Arabic, which nobody bothered to translate, the Sheikh saluted, made a smart about-face, and left the bungalow.

"What did he say?" demanded Potter.

"For political reasons—which you surely understand—the Sheikh has decided he cannot have American guests at this time," replied the Colonel. "At any other time, the Sheikh would be delighted. However, you are in the protective custody of the Arab Legion."

Potter could not restrain his glee. "That's official, Colonel?"

"I *am* sorry," replied the Colonel, not aware that a journalist who falls into protective custody might get a bonus. "Please understand—if you are under protective custody, instead of *guests*, the Arab Legion will make no trouble. You will be well-treated, of course."

"Especially the lady," added the Major with a mischievous grin. The Colonel threw him a stern look of reprimand.

"The lady. I'm sorry, I don't believe I know your name.

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Ah yes, Miss Ebener. It is Miss, isn't it? Miss Ebener, I think you will spend the night—" The Colonel paused for effect—"with the wife of one of our British officers." The Colonel sighed. "Women pose a problem in every army and the Arab Legion is no exception." The Colonel was immensely pleased with our little drawing-room comedy.

Potter wanted to know where he would spend his protective custody.

"I haven't decided," replied the Colonel.

Potter loudly demanded he be given a telephone line to the nearest American Consulate, which happened to be in Jerusalem. Potter and the Colonel argued.

"My dear man," said the Colonel acidly, "do you realize Jerusalem is in quite a different country?"

"I know that, and I also know you have telephone connection with Jerusalem." Potter knew no such thing, but he was always brusque and demanding when working on a story. His technique usually worked, and it did now. The Colonel pointed to a telephone. Potter cranked it.

As if totally uninterested in what Potter had to say, the Colonel turned his attention to me. "I hope you will enjoy your stay in Zerqa. Fascinating place, really. The lady whose bungalow you will share is a very cultivated person."

Potter was shouting over the telephone. "Hello, hello, American Consulate? This is Potter. *Baltimore Sun*. Take a story over to the cable office for me, will you? Yeah, I'm all right. She's with me. Take my story down and you'll have all the dope. Here goes—quote: An angry Arab mob today—"

I knew that was only the required objective beginning. Succeeding paragraphs would tell the *Baltimore Sun* that we were in protective custody at Arab Legion Headquarters. I walked over to Potter and told him not to mention that I was spending the night with a cultivated British Army lady. I wanted Weller to worry a little.

After Potter had finished dictating his story, he turned the telephone over to me.

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"Please tell the Associated Press that Charlotte Ebener is in the protective custody of the Arab Legion at Zerqa, and that's all," I said, hanging up.

"What the hell, aren't you going to send a story?" asked Potter.

"No. I'm trying the Mrs. Potter Method."

The British Army wife was indeed cultivated. She would not talk about Jordan, the Arab Legion, or her husband, who was "off on maneuvers." The Colonel had instructed her to see to it that I did not leave the bungalow. We drank gimlets until midnight, talking about Schopenhauer.

By morning the British in Zerqa knew Potter and I were only journalists, and not bungling American secret agents, as they thought. Our social status went way down. A British Tommy came over to my bungalow to tell me the American Consulate in Jerusalem had arranged for an Arab Legion plane to fly us out of Jordan.

Without any good-byes from the Colonel, the Sheikh, or the gallant Major who rescued us, we were put in a jeep, provided with a whole truckful of armed Arab Legion guards, and driven to a near-by airfield. We boarded a Piper Cub, flown by an Arab. An hour later we landed at Lydda airport, in Palestine. Our pilot handed us over to a platoon of Arab Legionnaires who informed us they would take us to the American Consulate in Jerusalem, where our protective custody ended.

A telegram from Weller was waiting for me at the Consulate. It read: IF UNABDUCTED BY ABDULLAH PREPARE MAKE BOSTON YOUR ERETZ SWEET ERETZ. Potter thought *eretz* was the Jewish word for home. I cabled Weller my telephone number and waited.

The call from Boston came through just as the Arabs and Jews opened up with machine guns near by.

"How was Zerqa?" Weller asked.

"Fine. Were you worried?" A siren wailed, halting all traffic.

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"What's that?" asked Weller, speaking from the calm of Copley Square.

"Sirens. Battle alert. Everybody has to get off the streets."

The machine guns chattered again. Then came the sound of splintering glass. I turned the receiver toward the battle sounds.

"I'm flat on the floor now," I said, getting more comfortable in my chair. "Sounds like Changchun, doesn't it? Wish you were here."

"Oh, come on home and marry me before you get yourself killed," Weller said.

I waited for him to phrase it in a nicer way.

"Did you hear me?" he yelled.

"Yes," I shouted. The line broke. It had been an exciting proposal, anyway.

The next morning I discovered that getting out of Palestine was going to be a problem. The American Colony was in the Arab-held part of Jerusalem. But the business section, with the banks and airline offices, was in Jewish-held Jerusalem. I stood at my bedroom window and watched British tommies unrolling coils of wire to keep our Arab quarter separated from the neighboring Jewish suburb of Mea Shearim.

No Arab taxi driver would venture into the Jewish quarter, and no Jewish taxi would come into the Arab quarter. Buses no longer connected the two parts of the city.

"Nobody can cross the lines without a special pass, and that is going to be hard to get now," announced the manager of the American Colony, motherly Mrs. John Whiting. I said I had to get downtown, to the banks and airline offices, because I was leaving Palestine to get married.

"Dear me," replied Mrs. Whiting. "That is serious. Well, I'll see what I can do for you."

I figured she could do it better without my help. Mrs. Whiting had lived in the Colony all her life and knew just about every official in Jerusalem. I went sightseeing in the Old City, which I could reach on foot, through Arab terri-

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tory, without crossing the lines. Down the Sacred Way, Arab Legionnaires were planting machine-gun nests. I stood on the spot where Veronica wiped the face of Christ, watching them. Then I groped through dark, medieval streets, lined with bazaars, hospices, cloisters, and churches. My guide-book said some of them were built by Crusaders.

Finally I found Calvary. The hill of sacrifice was covered with a basilica—a maze of chapels, tombs, altars, relics, gilded carvings, paintings, statues, tapestries, and doodads, the result of sixteen centuries of veneration. A statue of the Virgin was hung with heavy jewelry, gifts from the kings of the world. Pilgrims filed past iron buttresses and wooden scaffolding holding up the shaky dome of the basilica. I joined a group and followed them to the tomb of Christ, covered with a cracked marble slab.

"Exactly forty-three sacred lamps of solid silver hang from the ceiling," said the guide. "Four for the Coptic Christians, thirteen for the Armenian Christians, thirteen for the Greek Orthodox and thirteen for the Roman Catholics." He related all the treaties that were signed before the four religions agreed on the number of lamps each would hang over the spot where Christ was buried.

"Each of these four religions says mass in the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre on schedule set by international agreement," continued the guide. A string of naked electric light bulbs lit up as a procession of bearded priests in tall miters wound through the basilica toward the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, swinging silver incense pots. The guide consulted his watch. "Now it is time for the Coptic Christian mass."

In a far corner of the basilica I noticed a group of Arabs, watching the procession with undisguised astonishment. "Those Arabs are standing where the Prophet Abraham offered his son Isaac to the God of the Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians," sang the guide. "All three religions—Jews, Mohammedans, Christians—revere the Prophet Abraham."

A souvenir merchant weaved through the crowd, selling

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crowns of thorns. "Buy one, buy one," he whined. "They are blessed."

When I left Calvary, the streets of the Old City were choked with humans and donkeys. The inhabitants had spotted the machine-gun nests and now they were moving out with baskets and bundles of belongings, sure that Jerusalem would be a battleground again. The overhanging arches and walls of the Old City shut out the sky and the sun. In the gloom blind men called for someone to guide them out. I took two of them by the hand and tried to avoid the puddles of urine and dung. We came out at Damascus Gate, where Arab traders and truckers were doing a booming business, selling rides to the comparative safety of the countryside. The blind men with me had been murmuring a prayer to Allah. I turned them over to a Muslim mullah who had a kindly face.

Back at the American Colony, Mrs. Whiting had good news for me. She had found a British officer who would take me through the lines in his armored car.

"*Salaam and shalom*," said the officer, as he deposited me at a downtown hotel. The words were the Arabic and Jewish greetings—both meaning peace.

Some 5,000 other people had the same idea: to get out of the Holy Land immediately. The airline offices were packed with jostling, frantic people. A clerk told me he would put my name on a waiting list. Perhaps I could have a seat within a month.

Johnny Donovan of N. B. C., Jerusalem's most popular man-about-town, had a fabulous gift of gab and I did not. When Donovan heard I was going to marry Weller, he talked T.W.A. into giving me a seat "before the prospective groom changes his mind."

A few nights later I was aboard a bus, bound for Lydda airport, thirty-three miles away. The Arab driver seemed to be in a terrible hurry. We swung around corners on two wheels and after we left Jerusalem's lights, he kept the

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speedometer at fifty miles an hour. Only once did he slow down, when we came to a sharp curve, flanked by hills on either side. Then he honked his horn in rhythm, winked his headlights, and picked up speed again. I wondered if he was signaling somebody.

As I waited for my flight to New York to be called, the airport clerks suddenly deserted their counters and hovered around the telephones.

"A bus for Lydda has been ambushed," one of them whispered. "It had passengers bound for London. Jewish passengers."

"Where are they?"

"Nobody knows. The empty bus is lying by the side of the road with its tires punctured by bullets." The clerk riffled through some papers. "Oh-oh, Jewish driver on that bus." Apparently that Jewish driver did not know the pass signal at that curve, flanked by hills, as my Arab driver did.

"Trans World Airline passengers for New York," said a voice over the loudspeaker. "Please board the aircraft." We filed out into the cold, clear December night. The stars seemed unusually bright. At the bottom of the stairs leading to the plane, an official checked our passports once more. While we waited, machine guns sounded, not very far away.

"Come on, come on," murmured a fidgety passenger to the official. "For Christ's sake let's get out of here."

"Keep your shirt on, Mac," replied the official. "Remember, you're one of the lucky ones who can."



## IX

### South Seas

THE NIGHT before my wedding, the A. P. bureau in Milwaukee phoned to ask me if I knew why George Weller was in jail in Janesville, Wisconsin. "There must be some mistake," I said. "*My* George Weller is giving a lecture on American foreign policy in Janesville."

"It's your George Weller all right," replied the A. P. "We've got all the dope. Bostonian. Age forty-one. Author and lecturer. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for foreign correspondence in 1742. Marrying you in Mount Mary College chapel January 23. The only thing our Janesville stringer didn't mention is *why* he is in jail."

I tried to get the Janesville jail on the telephone but southern Wisconsin was having a fine blizzard that night and the lines were down.

The next morning my mother, who had never met her future son-in-law, refused to allow me to go to the chapel. "If you're going to be stood up, you're going to be stood up in the privacy of your own living room," she said. "Besides, it's eighteen degrees below zero today."

Half an hour after the ceremony was supposed to begin, Weller turned up, very apologetic. "I got lost," he explained.



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My mother had the fixed idea that no foreign correspondent could get lost in Wisconsin. She looked at him rather suspiciously, but tried to keep her tone conversational. "Why were you in jail?" she asked.

"Oh, that," Weller laughed. "Janesville makes Parker pens and all the Parker pen salesmen were having a convention. There wasn't a spare bed in the town. So I went around to the jail and told the desk sergeant that I was a vagrant. He thought it was sort of queer, what with my new car outside. But he gave me a cell and didn't lock the door. Good bed. Very clean place. Excellent jails you have in Wisconsin."

"Thank you," said my mother, beaming.

We were married and drove off to Harvard, to attend the second term. One fine June day the end of the first draft of Weller's novel about Greece rolled out of his typewriter. Weller informed me he now had to get away. "I have to put space and time between the first draft and the revision of my novels," he said. "Otherwise I can't catch my own boners." Weller boarded an aircraft carrier which, the U. S. Navy said, had "no facilities for women."

After Weller had been in the Pacific nearly two months, I began to wonder whether he was planning to keep me in Boston, pacing a widow-walk, after all. I went back to work for the women's news service, got myself accredited by the Navy as a correspondent, and found Weller in a barracks in Honolulu.

"Where are we going now?" I asked sweetly.

"I'm going to fly to the battlegrounds of the Pacific war, courtesy U. S. Navy. Find out what's been happening out here in the last four years. Good stories."

"For women, too," I said. We boarded a Navy plane bound for Guam.

Guam was a new wild West on the doorstep of Asia—a wild West of jungle, red mud, and heaps of rusting tanks and planes. In a residential section nicknamed Upper Slobovia,

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Shirley Bercykowski, the wife of a Navy lieutenant, was hanging out her laundry. "Come on in and take a look around," said Shirley. "My husband and I built this Quonset from the ground up with what we could beg, borrow, or steal from the war stocks."

She beamed proudly and smoothed her blue jeans. "For a year we ate, washed, and did the laundry from water heated on hot plates. There was no soap or fresh meat, then, and the kids and I never saw a fresh vegetable for six months. But we're all set now. Get a load of the glass windows my husband scrounged. We're the only ones in Upper Slobovia with glass windows. Of course, the rats are still a problem."

All Upper Slobovia was engaged in Guam's main occupation—disguising Quonsets so that they wouldn't look so much like Quonsets. Everybody was out working—erecting lattice façades, climbing ivy, porches, picket fences, striped awnings, window boxes. Nobody paid any attention to the community bulletin board which told just what to do in case of a typhoon.

We drove down Guam's four-lane highway, cut out of the bush, past the new George Washington High School, consisting of 1200 students in nineteen Quonsets. The new snack bars and bowling alley near Nimitz Beach were doing a booming business and so was the Greenacres Country Club. Guam's Apra Harbor already handled more tonnage than Boston, and the U. S. Navy's stores now carried training pants for babies and eyelash curlers. The new cold-storage plant was loaded to the ceiling with fresh meat, fresh milk from the States, vegetables and berries from California, and a dozen flavors of ice cream.

Attracted by the free transportation, free medical care, and high wages, American civilian construction workers were pouring into Guam by the thousands. The ratio was still fifty men to every woman, but the margin was narrowing. The ideal of the Guam working girl was Vivian McConnell who arrived on the island with a law degree and a civil-

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service contract paying \$4,000 a year. Within thirteen months, Vivian was Guam's acting attorney-general, at a tax-free \$9,000 a year.

The girls lived, two to a room, in rat-infested Quonsets with broken plumbing. They ate slapdash meals, cafeteria-style, in Army mess halls, but they salted money away. Some married within a few months, though there was no housing for newlyweds. A typical Guam bride, Rebecca Carfango, a clerk at the Army's signal center, lived in a squalid dormitory while her husband stayed on at bachelor officer's quarters. They saw each other nearly every night, at the bowling alley, or the movies, or the country club.

The 40,000 Americans on Guam mushroomed over most of the island. The 24,000 natives were pushed to the southern tip, where they lived in tin-roofed villages marked "out of bounds to American troops and civilians." The Guamanians were so busy collecting dollar compensation from the American Government for their war-ruined palm trees, pigs, and huts, that they didn't protest very much.

Instead of worrying about "native rights," American authorities concentrated on "native education," such as the school for training native doctors and dentists. Dusky island boys, selected by intelligence tests, were picked off all the major atolls of Micronesia and sent to Guam to learn English, mathematics, biology, physics, anatomy, histology, physiological chemistry, bacteriology, and practical medicine.

"A lot of our medical students are sons of chiefs," remarked an American public relations officer, pointing to a group of islanders in G.I. trousers and loud Hawaiian-style shirts, bent over their thick books. "The chiefs see to it their sons get sent to Guam for an education. We can't tamper with the 'chiefly system.' It's theirs and they want to stick to it. At least we think they want to stick to it. But if a chief's son hasn't enough brains to keep up with the studies, we just flunk him out, that's all."

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I watched the first graduating class of native nurses file into a Guam chapel with lighted candles in their hands. They bowed as the starchy white caps of their new profession were placed on their coconut-oiled heads. Afterwards there was a laudatory speech by an American admiral, a free boat trip back to their home islands, and a nursing job in a native clinic paying a good thirty dollars a month. Micronesian females became career women with an aplomb that made many a U. S. official wonder whether "we are doing the right thing in encouraging American cultural patterns in the Pacific Ocean."

One day Weller and I sat on Guam's docks watching Chinese coolies load our unused wartime trucks, jeeps, aircraft parts, generators, scientific instruments, medical supplies, cranes, bulldozers, tractors, hardware, refrigerators, Diesel engines, and canned food onto ships bound for China.

The docks and dumps of Shanghai were choked with acres and acres of American surplus war material. The Chinese Communists were winning the civil war, edging closer to our equipment. But the coolies on Guam kept on loading. When Shanghai could not take another ton, our equipment was unloaded at Tsingtao, within earshot of Communist guns. When Tsingtao could take no more, Chinese businessmen sold the towering mounds of U. S. supplies back to private Americans, for American dollars. While our forces on Guam begged for tools and electrical equipment to fix up their Quonsets, the coolies piled boxes of them, never opened, aboard their American-chartered ships. Everybody on Guam knew the Communists in China were closing in on our equipment; pilots arrived with photographs proving it. But aid to Chiang Kai-shek could not be stopped. Americans had not yet learned that it was dangerous to give away war supplies to troops we could not control, who could not protect them.

But American generosity and eagerness to make a better world sometimes works, on a small scale. We saw it work on Tinian, the island from which the planes took off with the

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atom bombs for Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On Tinian we met Jack Millar, a twenty-six-year-old lieutenant in the Navy's Medical Corps who ran a new, sanitary, leper colony. Doctor Millar himself gathered the leper outcasts from all the atolls under our control and supervised the building of the new Tinian colony. He had volunteered for the job and trained for it patiently, for more than a year, at Molokai.

On Tinian, Doctor Millar and his pregnant wife, Jane, lived in a bare Quonset only three miles from the lepers. Doctor Millar was confident the disease could not be transmitted to his wife and child. "We'll take precautions," he said cheerfully. "We've always wanted to live on a Pacific island, and here we can be useful at the same time."

We found other Americans fulfilling lifelong ambitions to be beachcombers. But Sadie Thompson had lost her monopoly. These days Mrs. Beachcomber went along. Only thirty miles from the blood-soaked caves of Peleliu in the Palaus, lived Pat Taggart, his wife, Margaret, and their daughter, Kay. Taggart was the local manager of the official "American Island Trading Company of Micronesia." The Taggerts lived comfortably in a Quonset on the island of Koror, proud of their flush toilet, shower, and ex-officers'-club furniture, all taken from the war stocks on Peleliu before the coolies moved in to ship them to China.

On the island of Rota, in the Marianas, we met Frank and Loretta Brown and their three-year-old daughter, Merrily. As the only whites among 875 natives, they were having a busy time. Brown was American supervisor of Rota. He proudly took us to the village of Songsong, and pointed out the "Rota Cut-Rate Drugs. Open All Nite."

Not all the islands Americanized quickly. There was Yap, in the western Carolines, for instance. The Yapese were the most stubborn, hidebound natives in the Pacific Ocean. The women still wore grass skirts weighing as much as thirty pounds, and looked like walking haystacks. Our health authorities knew that Yap ladies never changed their skirts, and

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it was rumored mice lived in them, but there was nothing we could do about it. The wife of a Navy Commander on Yap tried an uplift movement. She organized the younger spinsters into a Girl Scout troop and told them they ought to perform community services. She asked the girls to start by picking up nails on the roads. Then the American jeeps would have fewer flat tires, she suggested sweetly. The Yap Girl Scout troop considered this suggestion, decided the Americans should pick up the nails because they owned the jeeps, threw away their new, green Scout neckerchiefs which covered their breasts, and came to no more meetings.

The Yapese didn't think much of American dollars, either. They preferred their own stone money, huge cartwheels five feet in diameter, stored in the front yards. The Yapese believed that anyone who took their money off the island would soon run into disaster, and they carefully told the Americans so. Some sightseeing sailors, however, scoffed at the idea. They stole a particularly huge piece of stone money, rolled it onto their L.S.T., and shoved off. They were still in sight of the cursing islanders when they ran aground on a coral reef. The rusty, abandoned L.S.T. was allowed to stay there, as a warning to anyone else who might think he could get away with violating Yap customs.

Every Yap bachelor owned a fine cane, carved in a very individualistic way. When the moon was high, he went around to the hut of a Yap debutante and thrust the cane through the thatch. The girl felt it carefully. If she liked the owner, or the cane's design, and wanted to make love, she pulled it in. The girl stepped softly out of the hut and followed her wooer to the beach. If the girl didn't care for the man, she pushed the cane out. The bachelor waited a while, poked her again in case she changed her mind, and then left to try his luck somewhere else. American sailors longed to try the cane system to see if it would work for them. But after that L.S.T. went aground, all Americans on Yap were leery of Yap customs and Yap curses.

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The island of Ponape in the eastern Carolines was the place for South Sea romance. The girls there had ivory skins and names like Smith, Hartley, Higgins, O'Neill, Skillings, and they spoke a little English. They were the descendants of New England whalers who anchored off Ponape a hundred years before.

Ponape women wanted babies by American men, preferably Navy men. They knew American fathers were generous and after they sailed away they sent toys and money for island children left behind. The U. S. Navy strictly forbade marriage between its personnel and the eager Ponape girls, but that did not affect the birth rate. Ponapeans have no word for "illegitimacy" and there is no stigma on maidens who have children. Half-castes get along fine on Ponape because it is a matriarchy, with everybody inheriting social status from the mother's side.

Ponape is also famous for its mysterious Nanmatol, "the place of the departed." We paddled through a labyrinth of silent, man-made canals, covered with thick, pale-green scum. We tied our canoes to a mossy stone staircase and then stepped through a long corridor, formed by high, weather-beaten, black basalt walls. The corridor led to a rectangular temple area, filled with altars of smooth, polished black stones.

The Ponapeans are devout Christians but they stubbornly hold to their belief that Nanmatol was built by two mighty giants who came from the west, stepping from island to island with two-ton blocks of black basalt on their shoulders. "Black basalt is found only in the Palaus, more than a thousand miles away from here," they explained. "No canoes could transport Nanmatol's enormous stones over a stormy sea."

As the sun went down, Nanmatol's slimy altars sent out a damp cold. We shivered. Our guides glanced about, their eyes uneasy. "The spirits of the departed are coming out now," they said. "Death is cold."

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We paddled back to Ponape town at full speed. There, an American archaeologist told us he was sure Nanmatol was built by the people of Yap, only a few hundred years before, and the black basalt blocks had been transported by canoes.

Trading ships still plied between island and island in the Pacific, but these days they were tubby, gray Navy A.G.'s. The traders were American sailors from Texas and the Middle West. They invited us to go along on a trip to Pingelap, an island in the eastern Carolines where the natives loved to make straw hats. Pingelap natives were taught to make straw hats by nineteenth-century whalers and the designs had not changed a bit. When we arrived Pingelap's new straw hats were waiting for us on the quay, all looking suitable for ice-wagon horses.

"We gotta buy Pingelap's hats because the island has lots of copra and fine trochus shells for making buttons," said a Navy chief. "If we don't buy Pingelap's fool hats, the people get insulted and won't sell us the rest of their stuff. So we buy their hats."

The Pingelapers led us to a long wooden shed with a thatched roof, packed with handicraft. The sailors barely glanced at the piles of floor mats, carefully woven of smooth and shiny pandanus leaf, in geometrical designs of beige and brown.

"O.K., we'll take all you've got of those," said our sailors. "Measure 'em up. We pay ten cents a square foot, no matter whether they are good, bad, or indifferent." Then our traders fumbled around in the corners of the shed, looking for other "gizmos" they thought American women would like to have. They picked out rainbow-colored belts that would encircle any woman's waist twice, straw sandals that couldn't stand the sight of water, and hundreds of straw handbags, either too small or too large. The sailors liked to buy grass skirts best, for Post Exchange curio counters, and bought enough of them to bridge the Pacific Ocean.

The Pingelap men loaded the island's copra onto our ship,



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and then came the "reckoning." We owed them \$1,200. The islanders wanted to spend every cent of it before we left. They dived into our ship's stores of flour, rice, sugar, canned meat, sewing machines, cotton cloth, and crates of cheap perfume. Cold cream was an especially popular item; Pingelaplers liked it for keeping their hair slicked down. Our Navy men also offered brassières, pantiês, and slips, of bright, peach-colored rayon. The ladies bought the slips but ignored the bras and panties. All the American things were sold at 40 per cent above cost, and Pingelap soon spent its \$1,200.

As we waited for the tide to change, an old man with a white skin came up to us and begged us to sing "Old MacDonald Had a Farm." His grandfather had come from New Bedford and taught him the song when he was a boy. Now all Pingelap knew "Old MacDonald," "but nobody can make the noises like Americans can," the old man said. The Pingelaplers and the Americans sat on the ground, surrounded by rotting coconuts, and sang "Old MacDonald" together, with noises. After the concert, the delighted islanders brought us coconuts for refreshment. We sipped the cool, sweet milk through thin reeds and could not avoid burping. As we sailed away the grownups and children of Pingelap, all in modest calico Mother Hubbards, yelled good-bye and "ee-yi, ee-yi, yo."

Our next stop was Truk, a Japanese military base during the war. Barefooted Truk children and adults were on their way to school, with English primers under their arms. I followed them and found their teacher was an American Navy wife. She told the students I would conduct the question-and-answer period that morning. They giggled with anticipation and wiggled their toes at me.

"How old are you?" was the first question, asked by a fifteen-year-old married woman who had been sent to school because her husband considered her ignorant.

"What's a federal government?" asked another student. He was thirty-three years old, tall and dark, a pure-blooded son

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of a chief who wanted a federal government, whatever it was.

"Have you really touched snow?" asked a moppet. Assured that I had, he asked why Americans didn't bring snow to Truk so that islanders could see it, too. The teacher came to my rescue and explained that snow melts in warm temperatures.

"How do people get married in the United States of America?" asked an eight-year-old girl. I asked her if she was thinking about getting married. She nodded solemnly.

A teen-aged boy squirmed in his seat, raised his hand bashfully a few times, but always withdrew it when his turn came. He had to be coaxed into asking his question, but finally he took a long breath and came out with it.

"Do white men and brown get paid the same in your country or do white men get paid more like here?" The teacher explained that brown men get paid well if they are educated. "I want to hear the answer of the new lady," protested the boy. I said I agreed with the teacher. The boy immediately opened a book and buried his face in it.

After question period, geography class began. The students clamored to hear more about Iceland, "that island with snow." At noon the kids stood beside their benches and sang "My country, 'tis of thee" in beautiful harmony. The teacher rang a bell and they piled out the door, screaming and laughing, exactly like their "dear friends in the United States of America."

"Truk kids hate English grammar and mathematics," sighed the teacher. "They like geography and singing, though. They really want to learn carpentry and canning more than anything else, but I don't know how to teach those subjects."

We flew back to Guam in an old Navy P.B.Y. which was so leaky on an earlier flight that all the passengers had to lie down and stick their hands over the holes so the plane

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wouldn't ship too much water as it took off. Weller wondered why the Navy was now flying crates that should have been condemned long ago. I soon found out, at a tea party given for me by the wives of pilots on Guam.

"All our husbands and their planes have been ordered to the Berlin airlift," they said. "We're stranded! In Guam, Manila, Okinawa, Kwajalein, and Pearl Harbor all the Air Force and Navy pilots were told to get going for Berlin on twenty-four hours' notice."

Phyllis Fowler, the mother of four children ranging from four years to three months old, was in a typical jam. On Guam this family of six lived in a one-bedroom Quonset hut with the two older children sleeping in the hallway.

"I can't even get back to Los Angeles," Phyllis said. "All the Navy transports are packed with American wives and kids being evacuated from Tsingtao and Shanghai. What are we going to do? We don't want to live out here in the boon-docks without our husbands. They said it was only 180 days' temporary duty, but I've heard that before. We just don't know when we will see our husbands again."

I wrote the story and sent it off, without mentioning it to Weller. I thought it would be fun to beat him on a news story again. Weller didn't think it was fun when clips of my story arrived. The admirals had told Weller the fact that we had no decent planes left in the Pacific was an official secret and Weller had been keeping it.

When the transport situation eased a bit, we flew east in another old plane to the Marshall Islands. A sixty-three-foot schooner named *Morning Star VI* was anchored in the lagoon of Majuro Atoll. The skipper turned out to be Miss Eleanor Wilson, a hearty Yankee who said she was a "modern missionary."

"My *Morning Star* is a direct descendant of the first Boston missionary ship which converted the Marshalls to Christianity in the nineteenth century," she said. "Of course, I am a

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Bostonian, too. I belong to the American Board of Missions."

We sat down and asked Miss Wilson to tell us what she was doing for the morals of Majuro.

Her blue eyes sparkled and she laughed in a delightful way. "That's a good question. The last murder in the Marshall Islands occurred in 1908. The natives are very good Christians. They go to church five hours every Sunday and one hour every weekday. Why, they won't even cook, fish, gather co<sup>co</sup>ra, or light a fire on the Sabbath. In fact, they have extreme religious observance, and that is why I am here."

Miss Wilson explained that the first Boston missionaries "counteracted" the influence of freebooting New England whalers and adventurers who brought alcohol, debauchery, and tuberculosis to the islands. The early missionaries put the native women in Mother Hubbards, banned dancing on the beach, moonlight trysts, and fun in general. They substituted new Christian taboos for the old, pagan ones. -

"Now I am trying to make the churches happy places, where young people will want to gather. I suggested to the native pastors on Majuro yesterday that they hold some old-fashioned folk dancing in the churchyard. Goodness, how I shocked them!" Miss Wilson seemed very complacent about her shocking suggestions.

"The pastors here told me dancing leads to eternal damnation. They wouldn't even consider the idea. It's a shame—the Marshalllese used to do magnificent stick-dances and I can see nothing sinful about doing those, even in a churchyard." Miss Wilson passed us glasses of coconut milk spiked with slices of lime.

"On all the Marshall Islands the church is the heart of the community," she continued. "But the native pastors ostracize a native for smoking—would you believe it? The pastors told me smoking leads to adultery. I guess that idea dates from the days when our New England whalers bought women here with cigarettes. Well, I think it is wrong to deny a young man or a young woman the use of the church because

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he or she smokes. The pastors say they will not change their rule. But I think they will—eventually, after a little re-education.” Miss Wilson thought trying to liberalize the churches of the Marshall Islands was quite a task.

“Look at me, wearing short sleeves. Sensible in this climate. But some pastors will not let the island girls wear short sleeves. Really, in this day and age!” She contemplated her open-necked, short-sleeved, cotton house-dress a moment. “I aim to bring a Christianity of happiness and self-improvement, instead of hellfire and taboos,” she concluded.

That night the lagoon and palms of Majuro were touched with silver moonbeams, but the natives were attending a class in bookkeeping. A couple of Majuran natives had learned bookkeeping from a Navy Commander who said it was “an applied science.” The natives opened a co-operative restaurant and applied bookkeeping. The profits, lovingly checked and rechecked, went into a barber shop, tailor shop, and cobbler shop. The two Majuran teachers then found they had still more profits, and sank them into a fish cannery, a soap factory, and a poultry farm. They then had enough profit for a co-operative retail store and a “foundation”—a \$10,000 scholarship for the best bookkeeping students on Majuro. Now everybody was studying the miraculous beauties of double-entry.

We sailed in a Navy supply ship to the lush island of Kili, the new home for the people who lived on Bikini until it was used for an atom-bomb test. A corps of U. S. Navy Seabees were on Kili when we dropped by, building tin-roofed, one-room concrete houses, a church, schoolhouse, council house, dispensary, copra shed, two stores, and eight large cisterns for catching rain water. The American Seabees had been working on this model village for the Bikini people for three months, and they thought it was one hell of a job.

“You know where the Bikini people are?” asked a burly Seabee foreman, wiping the sweat running down his nose. “Well, they are on Kwajalein—just relaxing while we finish

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this job for them. Those Bikini people are spoiled rotten. Also they are gadget-nuts. They want washing machines, Roy Rogers movies every night, and motorboats—all because they gave their stinking little island to atom-bomb scientists.”

When we arrived at Kwajalein, we headed for the part of the island where the Bikini natives were living until the Seabees finished their new home on Kili. A slender, dark girl dressed in a pretty, full-skirted, cotton-print dress came up to me and introduced herself as Mara, the Bikini school-teacher. She invited me into her hut and proudly showed me her \$100 sewing machine, her guitar, ukulele, pencil sharpener, and electric iron. The hut was lined with empty Coke bottles and mail-order catalogues. Mara explained that the U. S. Navy had just dumped three sacks of new mail-order catalogues at her house so that she could help the rest of the 186 Bikinis study them.

“We want to order our things from Sears now,” said Mara, “because we want them to arrive on Kili just as soon as we get there. Alas, Kili has no electricity. We cannot use electrical appliances there.”

Mara said the Bikini people had been working for the Navy as cooks, laundresses, and laborers for eighteen cents an hour and consequently had “lots and lots of money to spend.” She picked up a mail-order catalogue, riffled through the pages, and pointed to a red and white dress. “This is the New Look,” she informed me. “See, just like the dress I have on. I made it yesterday on my sewing machine.”

Mara motioned me to sit on the floor with her for a chat. She opened two bottles of warm Coke and smiled at me. I complimented her on her English, learned in only two years. “I am the most intelligent Bikini,” she replied. “I passed the intelligence test with the highest mark. But the American scientists said all we Bikinis are remarkably intelligent people.” Mara wanted to know if it was true that women have suffrage and are in the majority in all the civilized countries of the world.

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"We Bikini people have suffrage now. The Navy gave us a list of a dozen deserted islands and said: 'Go ahead, Bikini people, vote for the one you like best.' We women voted, too, and we are in the majority, so really it was the Bikini women who selected Kili as our new home."

"Why did you select that island?"

"It has many coconuts, bananas, papayas, and delicious tree-climbing crabs. Due to the geological formation of the lagoon, it also has good fishing opportunities for the men. Moreover, it is only 250 miles southeast of Kwajalein, and Kwajalein has movies." Mara rattled off this information as if she had learned it by heart, for campaign speeches.

On some of the smaller islands of the Carolines I had seen native women get down on all fours and crawl every time they passed before a man. This custom was supposed to indicate their deep respect for the opposite sex and the complete subjugation of women. I doubted whether any of Mara's female ancestors had ever crawled before men, but she assured me that they did.

"I like belonging to the female majority instead of the male minority, don't you?" asked Mara.

"Provided we women use our majority sensibly," I answered.

Mara's huge black eyes regarded me a moment. Then she laughed, pushing her shoulder-length hair on the top of her head in a coquettish motion.

"I will be ashamed if women everywhere do not use their majority sensibly," she said.

She jumped up, saying she would now introduce me to the other intelligent Bikini women. However, we found them all studying mail-order catalogues with such intensity that they couldn't waste time talking. Mara shook hands with me at the edge of Bikini Village. "Next time Bikini women have a meeting I am going to say we must use our majority sensibly," Mara said. "Good-bye, come and visit me on Kili sometime."

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The American end of Kwajalein was a Quonset city, facing the soupy sea. When the sun went down there were outdoor movies, bingo games, dances with Marine bands. The dignified spit-and-polish Governor of the Marshall Islands, Captain J. P. W. Vest, U. S. N., told us he was not at all worried about the morale of Americans stationed in the Marshalls.

"What I *am* worried about is our soaring birth rate here. The Marshalls are full of babies named 'Navy,' 'P.B.Y.,' and 'L.S.T.' How are we going to feed them all? Because of the new clinics on all the islands, six Marshallese are being born for every one that dies."

Captain Vest had a profound respect for Marshallese seamanship and showed us a contraption navigators used on long migrations by canoe. It was made of thin sticks and looked like a spider web. "Be careful," said the Captain, handing Weller the flimsy instrument. "This is the last one left in these islands. This is the sort of thing the Polynesians used to find New Zealand and Samoa and Tahiti. They were great sailors then, the greatest in the world. Columbus's voyage doesn't look like much when you match it up against the distances in the Pacific."

Captain Vest said the Marshallese could look at waves and tell whether they were rolling off an island, far away, or off a coral reef. They could even determine, just by looking at the contours of waves, whether their canoes were headed for a big island or a small island.

A barefooted, dusky Marshallese servant in a white uniform slipped into the room with a tray of highballs. He stood by and watched the Navy Captain and the correspondents admiring the flimsy navigation instrument of his forefathers. He said nothing, as befitted a servant, but his face radiated pride.

Kwajalein had two scheduled flights a day to Honolulu. We took off from a metal strip laid over needle-sharp coral rock. The moon filtered through steamy clouds; the palms,



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blasted by artillery during the war, were still torn and twisted into grotesque shapes. In the mist beneath us we could see the headlights of cars driving down the new highways. Kwajalein would never be a South Sea island paradise again.

We needed Kwajalein for our defense, said the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Underdeveloped areas were power vacuums, and the world could no longer afford to have them. This was *Realpolitik* and I had to accept it. We were not in the Pacific as mere old-fashioned colonizers, to make a profit from the resources and labor of the natives. Instead, we were shelling out money with both hands. Yet I was glad the U. S. agreed to administer her new islands in the Pacific as a "trusteeship" subject to inspection by the United Nations. The islanders, unlike the Arabs in French North Africa or the Negroes in South Africa, would have a means of demanding their rights and self-government, when they were ready for it.

Four years later, when I was in the U. N. skyscraper in New York, I dropped by the Trusteeship Council and asked how the natives in the American "Trust Territory of the Pacific" were doing.

"Take a look at the letters we get," replied a U. N. official. I picked out a letter at random. It was from Alfonso, Chief of Fanfan island in the Carolines. It read:

*"DEAR UNITED NATIONS: We do not like the way our breadfruit, bananas, and copra are sold to the U. S. government. We request that you of the United Nations give us permission to establish our own prices for these things. We also request that the money damages for death resulting from the war be set at \$22,556.75 for each death and for each house destroyed we want \$5,578.65. If the U. S. cannot pay this why don't you United Nations get the money out of Japan? P. S. the Bible says (Book of John, Chapter 3) Mu little chil-*

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***dren let us not love in words, neither in tongue but in deed and truth; and hereby we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before Him. Respectfully yours, ALFONSO."***



## X

# Pharaohs and Shahs

IN THE spring of 1749 Weller was assigned to the Mediterranean. The most interesting country on his beat was Egypt. The Army was planning the lightning coup that threw Farouk off his throne and raised General Mohammed Naguib. Young Army officers, who had been sent to fight the Israelis in Palestine, were ashamed and revolted by the Government corruption and inefficiency which contributed to their defeat. They indignantly reeled off the names of pashas close to Farouk who made fortunes supplying the Egyptian Army with defective arms. Mu00bbs spent their humiliation and frustration by demonstrating against foreigners. The British were detested for their occupation of the Suez Canal, and the Americans were hated for their economic and political support of Israel. The festering resentment was exhibited every day; shoeshine boys throws blobs of bootblack at anyone who spoke English, waiters spilled coffee on light tropical-worsted suits, laundrymen scorched the center back of ladies' skirts.

"You must never show any anger at these manifestations of nationalism," warned the American Embassy in Cairo. "Remember it is Ramadan now and all Egyptians are fasting

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from sunup to sundown. Tempers are short. A single word can touch off a riot, as if by spontaneous combustion."

Weller had to stay in Cairo to watch the spontaneous combustions and try to guess whether they would burst into flames in two months or two years. But I had retired from foreign reporting, having discovered I couldn't make any money at it and Weller liked me better as a relaxed wife, secretary, and copy boy. Occasionally Weller gave me a few days off, for my new hobby, sightseeing.

I took a train 400 miles up the Nile Valley to see the temples and palaces of ancient Thebes. There the old pharaohs left thousands of towering statues of themselves, with inscriptions reciting their glories. They were all incredibly vain men, but none of them outdid a lady named Hatshepsut who lived about 3,500 years ago. A marvelous obelisk, cut from a single block of rose granite ninety-seven feet high, was her legacy. And she left the most remarkable hieroglyphics of all.

"You who after long years shall see these monuments," Hatshepsut wrote, "who shall speak of what I have done, you will say we do not know, we do not know how they can have made a whole mountain of gold as if it were an ordinary task . . . do not say it is an idle boast, but how like her this was, worthy of her father Amun."

Amun, of course, was the supreme god. On a wall of her mortuary temple, ancient artisans chiseled pictures of Hatshepsut's divine conception and birth. The accompanying inscription related that the supreme god found Hatshepsut's mother "asleep amid the beauties of her palace. She is awakened on becoming aware of the perfume emanating from the god . . . He gave her his heart and he caused her to see him in his divine form. When he came to her, she rejoiced at the sight of his beauty and his love passed into her members at the same time as the perfume which emanated from the god . . ."

I had been reared as a Catholic and this inscription, dating

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more than a thousand years before the New Testament, fascinated me. I liked learning about the common denominators in old literatures and old beliefs, the stories cherished from century to century, across boundaries of language and race.

When Hatshepsut grew up to be a pharaoh in her own right, not merely a consort, she had massive statues made of herself, wearing a false beard and proudly clutching the scepters of power. Her sculptors made her breasts almost imperceptible and shaped her hips narrower than any man's.

Today's descendants of Hatshepsut, clad in dusty black rags, paid no attention to the awesome gates and pillars of Thebes. Their faces were covered with sores and their eyes were scaly with cataracts.

I wandered down to the stone quay on the Nile and tried to imagine the galleys that once brought the gigantic blocks of granite, from quarries 150 miles away, for Hatshepsut's approval. She was very particular. Only faultless granite would do, and it had to be a certain shade of pink for her letters to the world.

"Guide, miss?" called a dragoman from a boat. "I am a good guide. I will show you mummies. Very cheap price—only ten dollars." We agreed on two dollars and sailed across the Nile, to the opposite bank and the Valley of the Kings, where the pharaohs were buried.

King Tut's tomb was sealed and its treasures had been removed to the museum in Cairo, but we prowled through underground passages and staircases leading to the tombs of less famous rulers of ancient Egypt. The guide explained that the pharaohs built these labyrinths to confuse grave robbers, but "grave robbers were always smarter than pharaohs." All the pharaohs and nobles had themselves buried at the end of long shafts, carved into the limestone cliffs forming the Valley of the Kings. Hatshepsut had ordered her mummy placed 700 feet into the rock, which was the record distance, of course. Nevertheless Hatshepsut's mummy disappeared. "During the Middle Ages, Egyptian grave robbers

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hauled out the mummies because Europeans paid good prices for them," explained the guide. "Mummies were ground up to make medicine powder in those days." I wondered if that was proud Hatshepsut's fate—to be swallowed by Medicis as a cure for stomach-aches.

In one of the cold, narrow, musty-smelling passages, I bumped into a black stolie statue with the face of a cat and the body of a woman. "Very bad luck," mourned the guide. "You just touched the goddess of death." I shivered in spite of myself. The guide was pleased—tourists are supposed to be frightened in the tombs of Egypt's pharaohs.

Finally we came to what we were looking for—the pictures painted on the wall of a noble's tomb. The paint was still bright and the scenes of ancient Egyptian life were delightful. Dancing girls arched their backs and played tambourines. There was the noble, in his boat on the Nile, fishing. His wife was holding his legs so he wouldn't fall out of the skiff. There were banquet scenes, with guests getting sick in the corners. We saw how the ancient Egyptians plowed and harvested and weighed their grain.

On the way back to the river, the guide and I passed Hatshepsut's immense mortuary temple, facing the Nile, rising in magnificent terraces, supported by columns, looking oddly modern.

"Hatshepsut was a powerful woman, not like Cleopatra," said the guide. "Don't forget, Cleopatra was pure Greek. Cleopatra had no Egyptian blood in her at all—that's why she curried favors from foreigners."

The guide showed me where people left offerings for the dead Hatshepsut and remembered her. Her mummy had been concealed far away, on the other side of the cliffs. But Hatshepsut thought her spirit would be able to come through the limestone and receive the offerings that were left for her in her mortuary temple.

That evening I sat alone in a vast, deserted, hotel dining room under whirling ceiling fans which stirred the fetid air.

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Because of the anti-foreign demonstrations, few tourists were in Egypt. Fifty waiters, all in white uniforms, stood against the walls of the dining room and glared at me, but I was served with courtesy. The only other diner was a young Egyptian wearing khaki and a red tarboosh. We had trouble avoiding each other's eyes. Finally he came over to my table and introduced himself as Ahmed, an archaeologist who worked for the Egyptian Department of Antiquities.

"When are you Americans going to give us back our Queen's head?" Ahmed demanded.

"Have we got Hatshepsut's head?"

"Not Hatshepsut." He grimaced, indicating he did not care for her at all. "I mean Queen Nefretiti's head."

Plaster heads of beautiful, swan-necked Nefretiti were displayed everywhere in Cairo. Curio shops had them in all sizes. Her picture appeared in hotel lobbies, cafés, and in streetcars. It was always the same portrait of Nefretiti, with a full-lipped smile, magnificent sloe eyes under high, arched brows, and wearing a tall, blue headdress, more queenly than any crown. I said I thought Egypt looked at enough heads of Nefretiti.

"But the American Army has the *original* limestone head of Nefretiti, made at the time she lived!" cried Ahmed.

"Where?"

"Wiesbaden, Germany. And we demand its return to Egypt."

"How did Nefretiti get to Wiesbaden?"

"German archaeologists found her head in the sand, near Amarna where she lived with her husband, the pharaoh Akhnaten. Without the knowledge of the Egyptian Government, the Germans smuggled Nefretiti out of Egypt and put her in the Berlin museum. Once the Germans said they would give her back, as a diplomatic gesture, to counteract British influence in Egypt. But then we heard Hitler had fallen in love with her and the Germans would not give her back. The American Army found Nefretiti in an Austrian salt

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mine at the end of the war. She was put there to avoid being smashed by bombs."

The U. S. Army had now announced it would give Nefretiti back to the Berlin museum, and Ahmed thought this was criminal. "Why not send her back to Egypt, where she belongs? It would cost you nothing. We Egyptians are very fond of Nefretiti, especially now."

"Why especially now?"

"She is a patriotic symbol of our nationalist feelings," replied Ahmed. He pushed back his chair, nodded, and left the dining room.

I opened a book on ancient Egypt, which described the power of Hatshepsut and the persuasiveness of Nefretiti. This particular Egyptologist had an idea that the first one-god religion, founded by the pharaoh Akhnaten, was really Nefretiti's passion. Akhnaten and Nefretiti had abandoned Thebes and its thousands of gods with the faces of cats, donkeys, rams. They built a new capital of Egypt, at Amarna, where they devoted themselves to the worship of only Aten, "the creator and preserver of all things."

They told their artists to stop making those rigid statues, arms straight at the sides, one foot forward, all looking exactly alike. The pharaoh Akhnaten was sculptured the way he really looked, with a sagging belly, roundish hips, a long horse-face, and flapping ears. The artists were even allowed to paint the pharaoh and his beautiful Nefretiti kissing each other or playing with their baby daughter. But while the royal couple enjoyed their revolution in art and religion at Amarna, the Egyptian empire began to break up. Akhnaten and Nefretiti had a violent quarrel and then Akhnaten married his own daughter, and had a daughter by her.

Why did the marriage of Nefretiti and Akhnaten fail? Learned Egyptologists in the twentieth century gossiped that they probably quarreled over the new religion. Nefretiti was supposed to have been a fanatical monotheist, but her



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husband wanted to compromise with the priests of the old religion, at Thebes, to keep the empire together.

At a Cairo dinner party a few weeks later, I noticed the silver handles of the coffee spoons were wrought into a likeness of Nefretiti's head. I turned to the American diplomat sitting beside me and asked why our Government didn't give Nefretiti back to Egypt. We certainly needed a little good will at the moment.

"Egyptians are always talking about Nefretiti these days," murmured the diplomat. "However, if she were returned to Egypt, it might set an embarrassing precedent. Then the British might have to return the lovely lady of the Erechtheion to Greece. And the French might have to part with the Winged Victory."

In Africa, American diplomacy always carefully avoided irritating the British or the French. Beautiful, 3,000-year-old Nefretiti could not be allowed to set any more embarrassing precedents.

A tomb in Amarna bears this inscription: "Lady of grace, sweet of love . . . fair of face . . . Nefretiti, living forever and ever."

Weller and I moved on, to Syria which had an army revolution and a series of new general-dictators, to Greece, where American soldiers in the mountains near the Albanian, Yugoslav, and Bulgarian frontiers were demonstrating new American gift weapons to the Greeks still fighting Communists there, and then to Italy.

I suddenly had enough of constant travel and wanted to make a home. The Eternal City enchanted me. Fortunately the *Chicago Daily News* decided to make it our base of operations. While Weller went off on short trips to Egypt, to Turkey, and the touchy borders of Israel, I learned how to cook, how to speak Italian, and how to make drapes that wouldn't fall on my head every time I drew them.

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One evening in June 1961 the radio announced that Premier Mohammed Mossadegh of Iran was going to throw the British out of his country's oil fields. The editor of the *Chicago Daily News* wanted to know just how Mossadegh would go about it, inasmuch as the British said they would not leave.

We flew to Abadan, the site of the world's largest refinery, on the white-hot Persian Gulf. The first thing we saw was a crowd of Iranian oil workers standing in front of the neat brick headquarters of the mighty Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, cheering themselves hoarse. A lanky Persian in his early forties, in shirtsleeves, moccasins, and sun glasses, faced the crowd. He held up his hand for silence.

"You have heard my assurance that the oil is now ours," he said. "Now I want to see proof of your discipline. Within five minutes, I want you all back at work. That is all. Go." He removed his wrist watch and held it in his hand. Within five minutes the square was empty.

We introduced ourselves to the speaker, who removed his sun glasses and revealed a pair of black, snapping eyes. He was Hossein Makki, an amateur politician, whom Mossadegh had selected to take over the oil fields in the name of the Persian Government. Only a few years before, Makki had been a corporal in the Iranian Air Force, taking orders from a British instructor, but he had little deference toward the British now. Makki was a new type of Persian politician, "a common man," adored by the workers. He was not a Communist and his speeches were full of reference to the will of Allah.

Makki decided to get the British out of Abadan and the oil fields by a war of nerves. First he went around the refinery and took down all the signs reading "Anglo-Iranian Oil Company" and replaced them with new placards reading "Iranian National Oil Company." The British let him. Makki, after all, knew nothing whatever about petroleum engineering and Abadan was a vast forest of towers, pipes, boilers,

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ladders, smoking chimneys, vents, and dials which had cost British investors more than a billion dollars. There was also a ten-story shebang called "the catalytic cracker" which made high-grade aviation fuel. It was so complicated only half a dozen Englishmen, trained in Baltimore, knew how it worked.

"If Makki touches the catalytic cracker," the British said, "Abadan will be blown sky-high with all its 30,000 workers." Makki sensibly left the catalytic cracker alone. Now he would have a "show of force."

About 25,000 Iranians goose-stepped past him, throwing him salutes. The soldiers were followed by tanks, artillery, and anti-aircraft guns. The British also decided to have a show of force. They moved the cruiser *Mauritius* up the Shatt-el-Arab River, opposite Abadan, and announced it would "protect British lives and property." Would there be a fight? All the correspondents hastily looked up a 1921 treaty between Iran and her northern neighbor, the U. S. S. R. According to that treaty, the Russians believed they had the right to invade northern Iran if there was a war in the south of Iran. But the British were already fighting in Korea and Malaya. Makki knew they would not risk stumbling into a third war in Iran.

Iranian soldiers then moved into the bookkeeping offices of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and sat in the swivel chairs. The British left their desks, with their usual dignity, in a show of contempt. Afterward they locked themselves in their bungalows and awaited Mr. Makki's next move.

Makki decided the Anglo-Iranian's refinery and headquarters in Abadan were "already taken over." He turned his attention to the oil fields, deep in the Persian desert. One day he announced that he was going to Majdis-i-Suleiman, the nerve center for 326 producing wells. He invited us to go along. We flew in a battered ex-American Army plane over bare, craggy, brown mountains and landed in the midst of a crowd of cheering Iranian workers. As Makki descended

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from the plane they tried to kiss his feet and hands and shouted welcome. Makki carefully stepped over a pool of warm blood, spouting from the neck of a steer that had just had its throat cut.

"Animal sacrifice accompanies all ceremonies in this part of the desert," explained a Persian official who had perceived our revulsion.

Makki climbed into a baby-blue convertible, at the head of a long cavalcade of British cars and trucks bedecked with Iranian flags and signs reading "Iranian National Oil Company." No British were in sight; they had orders to stay in their bungalows "to avoid incidents." With horns tootling, we drove out to the oil fields, past lines of cheering, ragged Bakhtiari tribesmen.

For ten miles the road was lined with pools of blood from rams, sheep, goats, calves, and chickens that had had their throats cut with special sacrificial knives at the moment Makki's car passed by. Bakhtiari women in brown wool cloaks stood on the roofs of their adobe huts, emitting eerie screeches that represented joy and welcome. It was hard to believe these women came from the same tribe as beautiful, green-eyed Queen Soraya, wife of the Shah of Iran, the daughter of a Bakhtiari chief and a German mother.

Makki's first stop was the birthplace of the Middle East petroleum industry, where an Australian, William D'Arcy, struck oil in 1912. The original derrick was still there, painted silver. Makki made a speech and an Iranian worker read a commemorating poem.

As he stepped over a rusty pipe, on his way back to the car, Makki turned to an Iranian in overalls. "Fix that pipe," he ordered. "This place belongs to us now. We must take care of it."

After taking over innumerable wells in the name of the Iranian Government and Allah, and a few degassing plants, Makki's hair, clothes, and face were spattered with blood from the sacrificial animals. He said he had enough; we

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would now retire to the guest house of the "former Anglo-Iranian Oil Company" for a bath and a banquet celebrating the historic occasion. At the guest house, Makki went to the telephone, asked to be connected with Prime Minister Mossadegh in Tehran, and then headed for the shower.

Within five minutes Mossadegh was on the line and Makki talked to him, modestly clutching a towel around his middle. He listened to some instructions Mossadegh was giving him and then put the receiver down, looking a little annoyed. Mossadegh wanted Makki to invite the British manager of Majdis-i-Suleiman to come around to the guest house for a call, "so that the British cannot say we took over these oil fields without their knowledge."

The manager of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's Majdis-i-Suleiman division was Percy Cox, a huge, blond Englishman carefully dressed in a blue business suit. He carried himself as if he were acting a role in a sophisticated Mayfair comedy. Cox and Makki shook hands and asked each other how they were. Then Cox said pleasantly: "How long will you be staying with us, Mr. Makki?"

Before Makki could answer, a little Persian engineer stepped up. "How long will *you* be staying with us, Mr. Cox?" he asked silkily.

"I don't know," replied Cox. "I have not yet received instructions from my executives at Abadan."

Makki offered the Englishman a cold lime juice and the two of them sipped their drinks, eying each other with cautious amiability. They had nothing more to say. Cox stood up after the ten-minute call, shook hands with Makki, and walked out of the guest house with a perfectly expressionless face. As soon as the door closed behind him, the Iranians burst into laughter, then dug into the ritual banquet of rice and mutton.

It took two more months for the British to amble out of the oil fields and out of Abadan. They went to Kuwait, Mosul, and Borneo, where they were still welcome. But the

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Anglo-Iranian Oil Company had its revenge. None of the major interlocking oil companies of the world would buy Iran's nationalized oil. The Persians were left drowning in their precious resource, and the Government coffers emptied. Eventually an international consortium was formed, to pay off the British and get the refinery operating.

Weller wanted to see what the Persians were like when they ruled the world, 500 years B.C. We boarded a bus for Persepolis, the city founded by Darius and his son Xerxes. For hundreds of miles we bounced over parched crags, populated by only half a million Bakhtiari nomads, migrating back and forth with scrawny flocks of goat and sheep. Along the way we met a chief named Yahyah Bakhtiari who, despite his war-whoop name, was a slight, forty-two-year-old businessman wearing a well-tailored, coffee-brown suit with matching shoes, socks, and tie. Yahyah had been educated in England and consequently liked to talk about "the classic role of the Bakhtiari tribes in the history of Persia." It was the Bakhtiari, he said, who fought off Iran's foreign invaders, including the Mongols.

At the time we saw him, Yahyah was busy organizing the tribes into a political party called "Hesbe Bakht Yar," a pun meaning "luck is with us." The lucky new political party already had a caucus committee and a chairman of the board who was the first cousin of Queen Soraya. The purpose of the Bakht Yar political party was simple: to get money out of Tehran for roads, schools, and hospitals for the Bakhtiari tribes. "We must educate our people immediately," Yahyah said. "Iran's blood—her oil—runs under the lands of the Bakhtiari and now they must draw it up and refine it themselves."

Yahyah confided that the Communists were just as busy organizing Bakhtiari as he was: "Seventy thousand Bakhtiari oil workers are now out of work in Abadan and the oil fields."

Yahyah also informed us that Dean Acheson made a speech in Washington, saying the Iranians had better come

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to an agreement with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company because they could not have American petroleum engineers and tankers to help them out of their fix. "That speech has been heard deep in the Persian desert," Yahyah said. "We do not like Washington's meddling in our argument with the British oil company. And we do not understand why your Government is eager to *give* us money but will not *loan* us good petroleum engineers and tankers so we can *earn* money through our oil. Well, I hope you will not meet with any unpleasantness on the part of Iranians because of the speech of your Secretary of State." He jumped back into his new American car and drove off to another political rally of Bakhtiari, leaving us wishing that Washington wouldn't always be in such an almighty hurry to help solve all international disputes everywhere.

From a distance, the tall pillars of Persepolis looked oddly like the smokestacks of Abadan. But as we drew close we found only the columns, a few walls, gates, and staircases were left of the city which once ruled the ancient world, from Greece to India. Persepolis lasted less than 200 years; Alexander the Great burned it and carried away its treasures on the backs of 20,000 mules and 5,000 camels. But the ashes of the brocade curtains that once hung in Xerxes' palace were still there, in old brass cups in a tiny, adobe museum. The caretaker of Persepolis, a little Persian scholar in a frayed suit, explained the ashes of ancient silk were found when archaeologists sifted the sand that had covered Persepolis for centuries.

While we stood on a terrace overlooking the orange mesa, the Persian described how caravans once brought the luxuries of India to the King of Kings in Persepolis. "This place here, where we are standing, was once the harem," he said, pointing to some reliefs on a wall showing a knight plunging a dagger into a dragon.

A magnificent stone staircase, leading nowhere now, was carved with reliefs showing subject kings bringing gifts of

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lambs, bread, and honey to Darius sitting on a throne. Carvings of thrones and incense burners were still sharp and clear, but faces of kings had been hacked away by Alexander's contemptuous hoplites.

Huge stone bulls' heads, toppled from their pedestals, lay about us. Their arched necks, carved in attitudes of protective defiance, looked bowed in defeat now that they lay broken on the ground.

A mile from Persepolis, the mountains were honeycombed with tombs, carved with portraits of dead kings and their glorious victories. The tomb of Darius, a shaft of dark gray marble, was empty.

A group of Indian tourists passed us, the women in bright chiffon saris. "They have come from Bombay to see Persepolis because it is the home of their religion," said the caretaker. "They are Parsees, worshippers of the god Ahura Mazda. See, here is the symbol of Mazda—light, in the form of sun and fire." He pointed to carvings on a tomb where the symbol of Mazda hovered over the heads of Persian kings, protecting them from evil forces of darkness. "The Parsees fled from Persia 1300 years ago, when the Mohammedans were conquering here. They went to the west coast of India, so they could continue to worship Mazda. Parsees are very rich, very smart."

The Parsees inspected everything, even the carvings left by passing tourists. One read "Stanley—New York Herald—1870." He was the Stanley who found Livingstone and became something of a legend himself.

That night Persepolis was bathed in moonlight. The white bulls' heads and broken pillars stood out in sharp relief. Evidently one of the Parsees was undergoing the sort of disillusionment I had felt on Calvary. He softly quoted Shelley's words:

*"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings;  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"*



## X. Pharaohs and Shahs

*Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away."*

In Tehran, Mossadegh and the officials of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company carried on endless discussions. Mobs rioted in the streets and Iranians were crushed under the wheels of armored cars driven by police trying to restore order. Averell Harriman was in town and announced that he would help the negotiations as "honest broker."

A couple of dozen British and American correspondents sat on the terrace of the Park Hotel, exchanging rumors, wondering if Mossadegh were stronger than the Shah. The Shah's twin sister, Ashraf, beautiful and politically cunning, was the center of every intrigue in Tehran. She and Mossadegh detested each other. There was a report that Mossadegh was going to run her out of the country. Everybody wondered if the Shah would be next.

We occasionally saw the young Shah, driving a blue convertible through Tehran's suburbs, with lovely Soraya at his side. The Iranians never cheered him; they simply watched their handsome Shah take his wife for a drive as if they agreed that that was a more enjoyable occupation than sitting on Iran's Peacock Throne, which had been put away where it belonged, in a museum.

One afternoon Princess Chams, another sister of the Shah, gave a tea party for the wives of American correspondents in Tehran. We sat on dainty white garden chairs on the lawn of her spacious home in a Tehran suburb, eating raspberry sherbet. Princess Chams was an exquisite little woman with dark eyes under heavy lashes, a coral mouth, and shoulder-length black, wavy hair. She looked every inch a princess, though she was dressed informally in a coral silk afternoon dress, a single strand of pearls, and high-heeled white sandals.

"Do you know Brentwood, California?" she asked. None of

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us had been there. "It is such a lovely town," said the Princess. "I know because I lived there for five years. It was lightful, being a housewife with a small ranchhouse and garden."

We looked at her palatial white villa, the tall fountain, and formal garden, trying to think of something to say. Mrs. Henry Grady, wife of the American Ambassador to Iran, told Princess Chams she was a Californian.

"Oh, how fortunate you are, Mrs. Grady," exclaimed the Princess. She picked up a white Persian cat and cuddled it. Princess Chams was the least political of Iran's royal family, known for her sensitivity and devotion to womanly things. "All my family loves America," she continued. She told how much the Shah enjoyed his tour of the U. S., when he was still a bachelor and dated American girls. Her other brothers, who had studied in California, "simply adored it," and one of her sisters married an American, a young Californian. We began to get the idea that all this talk about California might have a purpose. "Perhaps some day soon I shall live in Brentwood, California again," said Princess Chams.

We gathered that if all Iran's royal family had to go into exile, they wanted to make California their home. Such a plan would require American consent, of course. We looked at the wife of the American Ambassador, who murmured that it was very kind of the Princess to say such complimentary things about the U. S. and California.

Princess Chams told us she didn't want to talk about politics. We talked about Persian rugs, Persian poets, Persian cats, and Persian gardens, instead. After an hour the ladies-in-waiting rustled the silk of their dresses. Mrs. Grady thanked the Princess for our delightful afternoon. Her Royal Highness shook hands with us, saying she hoped we were enjoying her country as much as she enjoyed ours.

As we drove back to Tehran in the ambassadorial limousine, I asked Mrs. Grady if she thought Mossadegh really had threatened to exile the Shah.

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"Now, now, let's not talk politics," replied the wife of the Ambassador, her eyes on the Persian chauffeur. "Princess Chams is charming, isn't she? She is the Shah's favorite sister. He confides in her and trusts her with all sorts of delicate arrangements."

It was two years before Mossadegh forced the Shah out of Iran. But by then the people seemed to prefer young Reza Pahlevi and called him back again. Mossadegh fell from power, instead.

Molotov once told a Nazi Ambassador: "The area south of Batum and Baku, in the general direction of the Persian Gulf, is the center of aspirations of the Soviet Union." Now Weller wanted to see if it was still a center of Soviet aspirations. We boarded a bus for the Persian province of Azerbaijan—a wide plateau growing wheat and fruit as far as we could see. This was the breadbasket of Iran. Our fellow passengers sang rollicking Azerbaijani songs. The bus driver joined in the gaiety by keeping up an accompaniment on his horn. He dropped us off at a hotel in Tabriz, sixty miles south of the Soviet Union.

Our chambermaid was a buxom, blue-eyed Russian who said she was a refugee. She hated everybody, including Azerbaijanis. She scowled at them as we passed the open doors of their rooms, where they sat in circles on the floor, smoking bubble pipes. She locked me in the shower for half an hour, to make sure I would be clean after my "ride through felthy Persia." Our chambermaid spoke an astonishing number of languages. We kept our notebooks with us, just in case she was curious about sources of information.

In the hotel dining room a radio blared more Azerbaijani songs. Every fifteen minutes the music stopped and a long announcement was made in the Turkish dialect spoken throughout Central Asia, including Azerbaijan. The station was Russia's Baku. The talk was about the absentee landlords of Persian Azerbaijan "who sit around gaming tables

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spending ill-gotten gains while peasants eke out a meager existence plowing earth for them." The announcer added that things were much, much better in Soviet Azerbaijan, across the border.

The other diners were prosperous Azerbaijani landlords who listened to the Russian propaganda with scowls. There were some harsh words for "American imperialists who are helping the British imperialists get back into Iran's oil fields." We all smiled with relief when the songs of the steppes came on again. The manager told us everybody in Persian Azerbaijan listened to Baku "because it has such wonderful music."

The next morning we looked up Sergeant Paul Blackwood of Statesville, N. C., who was living in Tabriz because he was supposed to make sure American Army equipment given to the Persians was used "wisely." Sergeant Blackwood turned out to be short and stocky, full of vigor and righteous indignation. He was certain he had the toughest job the U. S. Army ever thought up.

"I am supposed to monitor a province of four million people with about two divisions of Iranian troops scattered along the Russian border. But the U. S. Army cannot afford to give *me* a jeep. So what do I do? I can only sit here in Tabriz and watch the motor pool here. Just a couple days ago eleven nice new jeeps we gave the Iranian Army vanished. I asked how come. The Iranians said they were out in the field. Because I haven't got a jeep of my own I couldn't get out of Tabriz to find out if they *were* being used in the field."

Sergeant Blackwood paced the crowded rooms, above a shop, which he shared with his new Armenian wife, his baby son, and a group of in-laws. He confided that he was glad we had come to Tabriz; he had some things he wanted to get off his chest, even if he were busted for mentioning them.

"Listen, American jeeps, spare parts, batteries, carburetors, fan belts just vanish into thin air around here," he

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said. "I watch and I watch but I can't catch those Iranian officers in the act of stealing our stuff. Yet I know a half-colonel here has sold about ten thousand bucks worth of our stuff. I can go down to the bazaar, right here in Tabriz, and see the new American snow-and-mud tires for sale, with our ordnance marks still on 'em. But I ask you, what can a sergeant do against a lieutenant-colonel?" He slumped down into his chair, dejected. Privates were paid thirty-three cents a month in the Iranian Army. A good U. S. storage battery was worth a month's salary even for a lieutenant.

"At Ardebil—that's less than twenty miles from the Russians—I heard forty-four U. S. tanks were out of order. Why? Because a general, yes, a general, had pocketed the money from the spare parts. Lucky there was some evidence against him. He was recalled to Tehran and placed on inactive status." Blackwood rubbed his palms. "Brother, could I pull some beautiful snap inspections and catch 'em in the act, if I only had a jeep myself."

It was the sergeant's considered judgment that the Russians could take Azerbaijan in a day if they decided to move across the border again. "The Iranian Army would be immobilized. The tanks, ammunition, and fuel are all in separate warehouses, under separate keys. The keys are held by different men. In an emergency, if the keys couldn't be found, nobody could get at the equipment. I ask you, Mr. Weller, what the hell is the use of American military aid if that's the way it is used?" We sat in silence for a while. Then Blackwood brightened. "You want to see some useful American aid, real personal, which works?"

We said we certainly did. Blackwood suggested we walk down the road a piece, to the "American Hospital," a Presbyterian mission. There we found a line of tall, fierce looking men dressed in odd costumes—baggy pantaloons of dark-red silk, cummerbunds of ragged brocade, dishrag turbans—standing outside a door marked "clinic."

"We have mostly Kurdish tribesmen today. Of course we

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also treat Azerbaijanis, Armenians, and Persians," said a starched American nurse who could speak Kurdish, Azerbaijani, Armenian, and Persian. She led us into the clinic to watch Dr. Paul Schneider, a beanpole Californian who looked like an aging tennis player, set the broken bone in a woman's jaw.

"Her husband beat her yesterday," Dr. Schneider explained. "Kurds are impulsive people." The husband stood by, looking very contrite. Dr. Schneider's next patient was a burly Azerbaijani with cataracts in his eyes. "I think I can fix those all right," murmured the doctor, and sent the man off with a ticket for a hospital bed. The rest of the patients were treated with atabrine for malaria and cathartics for their worms.

"Lots of Kurds walk here from their homes, even 300 miles away," said the doctor. "Of course, some of them aren't really sick. They just want to see us and talk to us about their troubles. Some think this is the American Consulate." Dr. Schneider laughed at the idea. "We do have an American Consulate in Tabriz, you know. It's a little farther down the road."

We walked a little farther down the road, to the American Consulate, and discovered it had no visitors whatever. Not one of the Americans working there could speak the local languages.

As we walked back to our hotel, a gay red-and-yellow Studebaker drove past with its owner, an Azerbaijani with a handlebar mustache, known as "Stalin Mahmud." He was one of the minor officials of the puppet republic which the Russians had set up in Azerbaijan during their six years of military occupation of northern Iran, from 1760 to 1766.

We boarded another bus and strained over the cindery, treeless mountains again. After a few hours we drove through a lush, tropical lowland of palms, green rice fields, and thatch-roofed villages hidden in vines and underbrush. This was the Caspian littoral. Ducks paddled on dreamy

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ponds under sheets of warm rain and fat black snakes were crushed under our wheels.

Within a few minutes after our arrival, we learned that oil, of an especially fine quality, had been discovered to the east, at nearby Amul. Weller disliked hearing about new oil wells near Russia's borders, especially near Russia's great arsenals in Central Asia. To bring Persian Gulf oil north to Russia, over the mountains, was nearly impossible, but Amul's oil made this part of Iran even more tempting to the Russians. We hoped Americans would not have to help repulse Iran's third Russian invasion, while the sons of Xerxes fumbled for the keys to their American tanks.

At Pahlevi, a Persian resort town of palm-lined boulevards and big villas, we saw an astonishing number of Cadillacs. They belonged to the men who owned the rice fields stretching for miles. The bluish-green Caspian steamed before us, three fourths of it in Russia. The Shah's yacht was riding at anchor—sleek, white, and beautiful. Next to her were black Soviet freighters, bulky and ugly, loading rice, fruit, vegetables, and bales of Persian rugs, bound for Baku on a neighboring peninsula.

All Pahlevi was excited about a record sturgeon caught a week before. She was a twenty-seven-foot female who carried 240 pounds of caviar in her belly. The sturgeon was headed for a Persian inlet, to spawn, but Russian fishermen caught her before she made it.

The salon of our hotel was full of poker players with stacks of silver rials in front of them. They were playing with such concentration that they didn't want to talk to us. Then suddenly the lights went out. The hotel manager explained that there was a big fire going on in Pahlevi's bazaar and he supposed it had burned a cable. The poker players decided they might as well go down to the bazaar and watch the fire, inasmuch as they couldn't see their cards.

A Persian politician gave us a lift in his Cadillac. We

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parked a safe distance away and walked down toward the flames which were lighting up the sky. Hundreds of inert, leaderless people were there, gawking and chattering and joking. Every few minutes they moved aside to allow a bare-foot man to come through with a pail half full of water. He flung the water into the flames and then trotted off again to get more. Other men stood on the roofs of adjacent shops and threw basins of water into the blaze. A few blocks away lay the Caspian, the second-largest inland body of water in the world. Yet nobody suggested forming a bucket brigade from the sea to the fire, as Americans would do. Blue-uniformed Iranian police, looking like Keystone cops in helmets and baggy trousers, walked through the crowd aimlessly, not establishing fire lines, not doing anything.

The politician explained that Pahlevi had no fire department. He recalled seeing some big new American hoses lying around town somewhere, but they were never used. "Wrong size, or something," Pahlevi, he added, had no sewage system either, "because nobody pays taxes."

Finally the fire burned itself out. A street in Pahlevi's bazaar was a smoking pile of ashes.

The powerful headlights of the cars momentarily lighted up Pahlevi's new 100-room hospital as we drove back to the hotel. The politician told us the hospital had been built with funds donated by the Shah, but it had been empty for two years because of lack of equipment. "I wish Americans would send some hospital equipment to Pahlevi soon," murmured our friend.

"Why should Americans pay taxes to furnish your hospital, if rich Iranians don't pay taxes?" asked Weller gently.

The motor of our beautiful car purred. After a while the Iranian politician thought of an answer. "Iran will go Communist if you don't help," he said.





## XI

# Khyber Pass

AFTER keeping us in Iran for two months, the *Chicago Daily News* asked Weller to take a look at Pakistan. I had been a Red Cross girl in Karachi and was eager to see what had happened to the city on the edge of a sand spit in the four years of independence from the British. We flew to Karachi and arrived in time to catch the annual Independence Day parade. Young Pakistani girls, who had been living secluded lives when I knew them, marched down the streets to the music of bagpipes, wearing white pantaloons, white shirts, and carrying rifles. After the parade, there was a dignified reception for foreign diplomats on the lawns of Government House. Envoys from all over the world, wearing full formal dress, congratulated the Pakistanis on the achievements of their four-year-old country, sipped nonalcoholic punch, and shook the hands of Pakistani ladies and gentlemen. Everybody behaved as if at a garden party at Buckingham Palace.

On the edge of the overgrown city, Muslim refugees from India squatted in their shanties made of crates, blankets, and corrugated tin, playing drums.

We hopped aboard a train and rode north, through 600

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miles of Sind desert, to Peshawar, an old trading town south of the Khyber Pass. Peshawar still bore traces of its Kipling-esque days. There was a citadel, and a British-built suburb of green hedges, lawns, and bungalows. We headed for the Peshawar Club, once an august, exclusively English institution.

When the British departed, the Peshawar Club ran into financial difficulties and it now had to accept anybody as a "paying guest" so that it could keep up its tile swimming pool, its tennis courts, its putting green, and the surrounding bungalows which once were "married quarters" for British Army officers. The Club's bearded, barefooted servants still wore white trousers, white tunics, white turbans, and big brass numbers. Abdar, the respected Number-One bearer, had been working at the Peshawar Club continuously since 1911.

Portraits of the Englishmen who had been masters of the Peshawar Hunt since 1870 hung on the walls of the "drinking parlor." During World War II, ladies became masters of the Peshawar Hunt and carried on the usual Sunday-morning exercise, but during World War I there was no such revolutionary shake-up at the Peshawar Club. A severe-looking lieutenant-colonel was Master of the Hunt, 1814 to 1819, and the riders continued to wear pink coats.

A sign over the slot machine in the Club's drinking parlor read: "It is cheating to use incorrect tokens. If the machine doesn't work, report to Abdar, who will have it attended to."

The Peshawar Club's library had hundreds of precious English books describing explorations of the Himalayas and Central Asia. A volume entitled *British Social Life in India 1608-1837* described dinner parties in Delhi's fort, during the century, when the British Commissioner liked to lead his guests down to the fort's dungeon and show them the last of the Moghul Emperors of India, who was kept in chains. The British Commissioner was fond of pointing out to his guests that "this miserable creature was the

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descendant of Tamerlane." Another book described the proprieties to be observed in case the Prince of Wales came to Peshawar some day.

The Peshawar Club's library was still guarded and indexed by Turab Khan, who had been taught by the British sahibs thirty years before. He was dusting a sign stating that Club members would refrain from conversation in the library.

"You are the first reader I have had in two weeks," whispered Turab Khan. "I keep Peshawar Club library neat, like the day the English sahibs left. Look, copies of *The Times*, *Punch*, and hunting magazines still come here from London." Turab Khan was full of nostalgia for the days of the British raj.

"Memsahib, if you could have seen this Club during the old time! Eight hundred ladies and gentlemens dancing around on Saturday nights. All tables reserved. Two-o'clock-in-the-morning suppers with so many people we had to put them even here in the library. The sahibs and their ladies drank champagne and there was always a hundred different kinds of dishes at the suppers. All my friends, the ladies and gentlemens, are gone now, back to England."

The Peshawar Club's bulletin board listed "Applicants Being Considered for Membership." They were all Pakistanis these days, Army officers and Government officials. Weller passed the scrutiny of the Peshawar Club's Pakistani book-keepers and we were accepted as paying guests, though not as members. We were shown to a bungalow in the married quarters by Bearer Number Twenty-two, who had a long, gray beard and a formidable dignity.

"I came here as boy to shine boots for British sahibs," he told us. "I am good worker. After fifteen years I became bearer with uniform and number." He flicked a dust cloth around the shabby living room, arranged the mosquito nets in the bedroom, and removed a small lizard from the bathtub. "When you want something, you can call Bearer Number Twenty-two," he said, fading out the door.●

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Dinner was served at eight. The Club dining room had holes in the roof and sparrows flitted in to help themselves to the crumbs on the tables. But the white linen was starched, the crystal sparkled, and the meal ended with a savory called "Scotch woodcock." Dinner was eaten in silence, but afterward the members and the paying guests of the Peshawar Club gathered on the lawn and sat down in the garden chairs for a chat. The bearers carried out electric fans and set them on the grass, to stir the lifeless air and keep away the mosquitoes, as the British sahibs had taught them to do.

A Pakistani Major, the color of coffee, said he hoped we would enjoy our stay. "I live here because I prefer the Club's run-down gentility to the rowdier commercial inns downtown," he said in a clipped British accent.

A red-faced, hefty British Colonel told us he was now an adviser to the Pakistan Army because he was "rather informed on Pathan tribes." A young Australian paying guest, who had committed the sin of wearing a khaki shirt to dinner, said he was a salesman for American trucks. "Pathan chiefs buy trucks by the dozens," he added with a happy chuckle.

A white-haired Englishman told us he had once been commanding officer of the Peshawar cantonment. He was now a salesman for English weighing machines. "I am stopping only a few days; I have an affection for this place and the Pathans."

The Pathans, he explained, take great pride in being the warrior race of Asia. The temptation to descend from their flinty highlands and raid sleepy, unguarded villages has always been irresistible. About seven million Pathans, all excellent marksmen, live in Pakistan. Another ten million Pathans, even better marksmen, live in Afghanistan.

"Pathans used to claim they were descendants of one of the lost tribes of Israel," said the Pakistani Major. "Since the

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Palestine war they have dropped that idea—they are all devout Muslims, now.”

“Yet the semitic features of the Pathans indicate they may have migrated here from Palestine—who knows how many centuries ago,” said the British Colonel. I looked at the small-boned, small-nosed, short, dark-skinned Pakistani with a smooth-shaven face. Then my eyes turned to the bearers, standing near by, all tall, walnut-colored, with hook noses, long beards, fierce black eyes, all looking like pictures of Moses.

“Yes, the bearers are Pathans,” said the Pakistani Major with a smile. “The British liked them as servants, so dignified looking. And then the Pathans, being such excellent fighters, served with the British Army, as soldiers and batmen.”

The British Colonel told us about a Pathan gentleman called “The Fakir of Ipi” who hid out in caves near the Khyber and occasionally swooped down in a lightning raid. The Pakistan Air Force bombed the caves of the Fakir and his followers, but that only whetted their adventurous spirit. The Fakir of Ipi, everybody admitted, was still something of a problem.

“The Fakir of Ipi is paid by Afghanistan to harass us,” said the Pakistani Major.

“Why?”

“Afghanistan would like to rule all the Pathans, the ten million there, and the seven million here in Pakistan. The Afghan Government is encouraging the Pathans to fight for a state to be called Pushtunistan. Pushtu is the language spoken by all Pathans. Naturally this future Pushtunistan would be a dependency of Afghanistan.”

“Things are quiet here at the moment because we have just finished bribing the Pathan chiefs in Pakistan with silver money,” said the British Colonel.

The Pakistani Major was not ashamed of keeping up this British method of quieting Pathans, but he pointed out that

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the Pakistan Government was also planning a dam which would water the Pathan lands. "Giving the Pathans cultivable land as a substitute for raiding may be a permanent solution to the constant unrest here," he said.

The British Colonel, who was the expert on Pathan tribes, disagreed. "Pathans will always prefer fighting to farming," he said. "You can't change human nature by building a dam. Another round here, bearer."

The Colonel raised his glass of Scotch. "I toast the Major and wish him luck in his new assignment." The Major explained that he was being transferred to a new post, in East Pakistan, the next day.

As we walked back to our bungalows, the Pakistani Major flashed his torch across the path. "I am afraid of snakes," he confessed. The Colonel laughed at him.

A few hours later I was awakened by the sound of voices and then the roar of the Colonel's 1822 Bentley. At breakfast the next morning the Colonel was white-faced and haggard.

"The Major is in the hospital," he said. "When he stepped into his bathroom during the night, a snake bit him in the ankle. He picked up a razor blade and immediately slashed the wound—perfectly, the way he did everything. He sucked the poison out himself and then hopped on one leg over to my bungalow." The Colonel took a spoonful of porridge, then pushed the bowl aside in disgust.

"The Major even made himself a tourniquet, from the cord of his pajamas. I checked it. Beautifully made. He'll recover. Very resourceful chap, the Major."

At the hospital, the doctors examined the fang-marks and decided a cobra was responsible. The Pakistani Major was given a serum. Then he sat down and wrote a letter to his mother, but he soon passed out.

"You better have your bearer check your bungalow for a passing cobra," advised the Colonel.

Number Twenty-two pushed aside a few pieces of furniture, peered behind the doors, and announced that the fatal

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cobra was not in my quarters. He had no idea where it could be.

For three nights and two days the Pakistani Major fought for life. His breathing became labored and he was put under an iron lung. There he died.

"Cobras often stop at Peshawar Club," announced Bearer Number Twenty-two, as if referring to an annoying class of guests. "But they come here only on Saturday nights, because of that Christian church over there." He pointed with a crooked forefinger through the trees. "See that tower next to the church? The bells ring there on Saturday nights and all the cobras listen and are charmed. They come out of the rocks to look for the music. The Club lights are on, so they come here instead of church." Bearer Number Twenty-two thought the Christian church ought to be silent, but a Christian Pakistani insisted on playing the bells every Saturday night, the way the British sahibs taught him to do.

An American diplomat, Jack Horner, checked into the Peshawar Club one afternoon. Horner held the rank of First Secretary in our Embassy in Afghanistan, and he wanted to know what ordinary Pathans were thinking. He was spending his vacation finding out. One of his Pathan friends offered to take him to his village, near the Khyber, for a "typical Pathan party." Mrs. Horner didn't want to be the only woman at a typical Pathan party and invited me to go along.

The Pathan village looked like a fort, with high mud walls. A pack of giggling Pathan children led us through the gate, to a central square, laid out around a rusty well. All the men of the village waited for us there, all wearing baggy, white cotton pantaloons and white cotton tunics hanging to their knees. They bowed and said: "*Salaam*"

We sat down at a long wooden table laid out with bottles of colored sugar-water and platters of English tea cakes with inches of green and orange icing. A thick black cloud of flies hovered over all the food. "Eat, guests," said the eldest Pathan, smiling cordially. We nibbled at the nauseating icing

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and tried not to think of the diarrhea we would have the next day.

All the Pathan men in that village had worked for English sahibs at one time or another, and now they were unemployed. The dry, yellow, rocky earth stretching for miles around was no good for farming. "We wish the British sahibs would come back," said the eldest Pathan. "Then we would have work."

"No. We must have Pushtunistan," said a young Pathan. "The future Pushtunistan will include country which has oil. When we Pathans have Pushtunistan, we will have work."

"But all the Pushtunistan you want is now part of Pakistan and you could not get it without a war," said Horner. "Only Russia could profit from a war between Afghanistan and Pakistan over Pushtunistan."

"The Russians are 600 miles away from here," replied a young Pathan. "And we are not afraid of them." All the others laughed at the notion of Pathans being afraid of Russians.

I didn't come to the village to hear more about that future Pushtunistan that had to be carved out of Pakistan. I asked the eldest Pathan if we could meet the ladies of the village.

"Yes, memsahib," he replied, "but Horner sahib cannot come." He led Mrs. Horner and me down a stony path and stopped before a mud wall with a wooden gate. "This is my family," he said, pushing open the gate and stepping into a courtyard full of dozens of women suckling flyspecked babies.

The old man explained that each woman was the wife of one of his relatives. These Pathans did not have more than one wife "because wives are expensive and two wives double a man's troubles." The Muslim limit of four wives, he thought, was only for saints or prophets.

The women of the village were all Pathans—tall, like their husbands, with hooked noses and eagle eyes. They wore shapeless mud-caked robes of black cotton. Chickens and goats wandered in and out of their untidy houses. Mutton



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stew was cooking over the fires, and the clan's single privy was odorous. The old man introduced us to every woman in that village. They shook hands and passed us their babies for patting.

When we got back to the central square, we found Horner and the Pathan men still discussing Pushtunistan. To get them off the subject, I asked if the Pathans had any plans for liberating their fellow Muslims in the Kashmir Valley again. I knew that these Pathans had raided the Kashmir Valley two years before—some of the Pathan wives we had just met wore heavy silver Kashmiri hoops in their ears and delicate Kashmiri embroidery.

"We are ready to fight for Kashmir any time," said a young man. "But the Pakistan Government won't let us. The Pakistan Government thinks the United Nations will get Nehru's Hindu troops out of the Kashmir Valley." Everybody guffawed at the idea of the U. N. settling anything. We thanked our hosts, boarded a *tonga*, a horse-drawn carriage, and drove back to the Peshawar Club. Horner sahib seemed very thoughtful.

North of Peshawar, a winding asphalt highway has been cut through the cliffs of the Khyber Pass. Sheer walls of rock rise from the sides of the road. Plaques and coats of arms, cemented on the canyon's walls, commemorate the British regiments who died there to the last man, trying to make the Khyber Pass part of Queen Victoria's empire. Our U. S. Embassy station wagon sped us through the Khyber so fast the plaques and monuments were just a blur.

"We're carrying the diplomatic pouch, don't forget. This is not a sightseeing trip," said our driver. He was Robert Dreesen of Chicago, the diplomat who walked over the Himalayas to escape being captured by Chinese Communists in Sinkiang. Dreesen was a small, thin man with reddish hair who looked as if he had never had an adventure in his life. He told us he liked "active jobs," such as driving the diplo-

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matic courier through the Khyber to our Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan.

The diplomatic pouch, a brown leather mailbag, was lying on the floor of our station wagon in front of the courier, a muscular ex-Marine carrying a pistol. Small, dark Pakistani soldiers, noting our diplomatic corps license plates, waved us on to the Afghan border. We drove up before a wooden bar laid across the road and guarded by Pathans—Afghan Pathans—in pantaloons and tunics, with rifles slung on their backs. They took our passports and disappeared into an adobe hut at the side of the road.

We watched a bus, painted silver and labeled *The Afghan Mail*, start off for Kabul jammed with passengers. The overflow passengers rode on the roof, with the steel trunks that had been wrapped in rugs to keep them from being smashed by the journey. The women on *The Afghan Mail* were completely covered by black cotton tents. They could see out through tiny slits of black crochet, but we could see nothing at all of their faces.

"I've met girls from Afghanistan aboard boats on the way to Europe," said the courier. "They wore shorts on deck and Bikinis in the pool."

"That may be so," replied Dreesen, "but once an Afghan woman arrives at this border, those black pup-tents go back on again."

Afghans were loading twenty tons of supplies onto a truck Detroit built for seven. Dreesen informed us American trucks lasted only six months in Afghanistan. Then they were sagging wrecks with broken springs, motors shaken to death, and underpinnings dented by a million rocks.

"The Afghans repair their punctures with *kishmish*, a raisin paste, because rubber is scarce in Afghanistan," said Dreesen. "Everything is scarce in Afghanistan."

The Pathan border guards returned our passports with smiles of approval. We started up, crossed the frontier onto a dirt road, rode for a mile, and then lurched into a hole. We

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had to dig the station wagon out with shovels. "Welcome to Afghanistan," muttered Dreesen. "We'll do this a few more times before we get to Kabul."

We drove through another rocky canyon much like that of the Khyber Pass. On the tops of the cliffs we could see the walls, watchtowers, and water cisterns of Pathan villages.

"Several times the British pushed through the Khyber and got even as far as Kabul, only to have Pathans swoop down from those forts, cut off their rear, and annihilate them," Dreesen said.

Weller asked if the Pathans still swooped. •

"Only for sport or practice," Dreesen replied. "When General Jacob Devers was passing through the Khyber country, Pathans stopped him to ask why he wasn't getting the Hindus out of the Kashmir Valley. The Pathans stopped George McGhee of the State Department once. He got away by promising 'Right will prevail.'"

At these remarks our courier glanced down at the pouch, put his feet on it, and touched his pistol.

At noon we reached Jellalabad, an adobe trading town sprawled along a dry river bed, garrisoned by the Afghan Army. Dreesen stopped the car and we scrambled out to stretch our legs and munch sandwiches. Murky clouds were piling up in a valley to the left of us. "I don't like the looks of them, at all," Dreesen said.

Suddenly blue bolts of lightning streaked the black sky. Thunder reverberated down the canyons. The clouds burst, dumping torrents of water. We were drenched before we could get back into the station wagon. "We gotta get across that bridge before it goes," Dreesen announced, roaring the motor and weaving in among carts and carriages drawn by horses and donkeys. On the far side of the bridge, he stopped the car again and we looked back. "Flash flood!" yelled Dreesen.

A huge brown wall of water roared down the dry river valley toward the bridge. The donkeys and horses reared with

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fright and broke from their reins just as a wave hissed over the bridge. Families were thrown out of the carts. They struggled to keep themselves on the bridge, their eyes bulging with terror. Then the crest hit. Suitcases, horses, donkeys, humans all floated away. A moment before I had seen a boy running with a donkey over the bridge. Now the donkey was in the water, upside down, all four legs in the air, being carried downstream. The boy had disappeared. Weller got out of the car to take pictures.

"Flash floods aren't news in Afghanistan," Dreesen said. "We have them all the time. Erosion. The trees were all burned by armies on their way to the Khyber Pass and India. The Persians, Alexander, Tamerlane, Babur, the Moghuls from Central Asia—they all passed this way, and they didn't leave anything but rocks."

"Have you ever been caught in the midst of a flash flood?" asked the courier.

"Sure," replied Dreesen. "Only two weeks ago I was left sitting on the top of this station wagon for three hours."

"What happened to the pouch that time?" asked the courier.

"Lucky thing. I didn't have one. I was sent down to Peshawar just to pick up supplies."

Within ten minutes the sun was shining again, but the central arch of the bridge was cracked and it sank into the muddy ravine.

"Building bridges in Afghanistan is a very discouraging business," Dreesen said. "A German engineer employed by the Afghan Government spent nearly a year making a fine steel bridge. He said it would hold. Last month he stood by and saw his bridge torn to pieces by a flash flood."

*The Afghan Mail* was parked near by. The male passengers were kneeling on the wet rocks, facing toward Mecca. Most of their faces were expressionless in prayer, but some were transfigured as they murmured the ceremonial words: "I cut myself off from the world." The lady passengers, still

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wearing their black tents, stayed inside the bus, but they, too, bowed their heads to the will of Allah.

"*The Afghan Mail* always stops five times a day for prayer," explained Dreesen. "Lucky the driver parked on this side of that bridge."

It was nine o'clock at night before we saw the lights of Kabul, strung along its old walls like a necklace. It had taken us thirteen hours to ride the 180 miles from Peshawar to Kabul. "Sure was an easy trip this time," remarked Dreesen. "Only three flat tires." He dropped us off at the American Embassy residence.

"Hello, I was worried about you," said Ambassador George Merrell, a career diplomat with warm blue eyes and a beautiful voice. "You didn't have any incidents, did you?"

"Just a flash flood," said Weller.

"Oh well," sighed the Ambassador with relief.

The capital of Afghanistan is a town of flat-roofed houses and shops of baked mud, open ditches carrying water into the settlements and sewage out, and dusty, unpaved streets. But Kabul takes diplomacy very seriously. All the major nations of the world maintain embassies or legations there and the diplomats constantly emerge from their adobe houses wearing black silk top hats and striped trousers, for official calls. Kabul, a few hundred miles from Russia's arsenals in Central Asia, is an important "listening post."

The Czech Chargé d'Affaires called at the American Embassy Residence one day and asked if he could borrow a movie projector. Ambassador Merrell didn't want his projector used for anti-American propaganda, but at the same time he didn't want to discourage the Czechs from dropping by. The American Ambassador offered the Czech Chargé a gimlet and asked, very casually, what sort of movies the Czech Embassy wanted to show.

"We have a documentary on puppets," replied the Czech Chargé.

Keeping back a smile, the Ambassador agreed to loan the

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projector. That night the diplomatic corps of Kabul watched the documentary on puppets with solemn faces, and the political significance of the evening's entertainment seemed to escape only the Czechs themselves.

Canasta had just reached Central Asia and Kabul was mad about it. The Chargé d'Affaires from Iraq gave important Canasta parties several times a week and the diplomats attended as part of their listening job.

Kabul was having its annual fair. Red and yellow tents were spread out for the distinguished visitors who had come from all parts of Afghanistan. We saw Mongols, descendants of Genghis Khan, who lived in the mountain-locked valleys of central Afghanistan. They were very fond of orange pop and sipped it all day long.

Moon-faced, rosy-cheeked Uzbeks, of mixed Turkish and Mongol blood, came from the steppes of the Oxus River to display their cotton and fine caracul hides.

The artists and merchants at the fair were ivory-skinned Tajiks, people of Iranian blood.

Afghan Pathans were at the fair, too. They had an exhibition of handmade rifles and a huge map of the future Push-tunistan. Young Pathan students walked through the crowds passing out leaflets and declaring: "Our fellow Pathans in Pakistan must be liberated!" Ambassador Merrell murmured that the homemade rifles made by the desert Pathans were the best in the world.

The rulers of Afghanistan, the royal emirs, are sophisticated and educated Pathans. They live in a suburb of Kabul called Paghman, overlooking the snow-capped peaks of the Hindu-Kush. The name means "Hindu Killer" and dates from the days when small brown men and women were dragged over its 13,000-foot passes to be sold as slaves in the great cities of Central Asia—Samarkand, Bokhara, and Herat.

The emirs gave garden parties under their chinar trees every afternoon during the fair. We met French archaeologists,

Austrian textile experts, German sugar-beet experts, Indian malaria fighters, American teachers, American coal-mining experts, American dam builders, and American cotton-growing experts. Paghman is the world rendezvous for "technical assistants." The Afghan Government was in a hurry to modernize the country and paid well for know-how.

We talked to Richard Soderberg, a twenty-eight-year-old teacher from Los Angeles, who was hired to run the new Afghan Institute of Technology which taught forty Afghans the basic principles of engineering electricity, automotive works, and drafting.

The prexy of Kabul's Habibia College turned out to be Howard Larson of Brooklyn. Larson was only thirty-one years old, but he commanded a faculty of seventy British, French, and American teachers. "The Pathans are so avid for knowledge these days that boys study twelve subjects at a time, including Pushtu, Persian, English, and Arabic," Larson said. In his spare time, Larson tutored the son of the Shah of Afghanistan and seemed still surprised at the idea of a Brooklyn boy doing that sort of work.

In a far corner of a Paghman party, I met Gene Bertone, a shy little man from Colorado. I asked him what he was doing in Afghanistan.

"I go from flock to flock along the Oxus and find out why the Uzbek sheep are sick or why they aren't breeding. You see, Afghanistan needs dollars and good caracul fur is just about the only thing they can sell to us." I asked Bertone to tell me something about life along the Oxus steppes.

"I stay in huts and tents with Uzbeks most of the time," he said. "Sometimes I meet some of those caracul kings—you know, the rich Uzbeks with enormous flocks of sheep who migrated to Afghanistan from Russia because they didn't want to be collectivized. The caracul kings live in nice houses with rugs and good food." A pained look came into Bertone's face. "The Russians have heard I am working on the sheep along the Afghan side of the Oxus and one of their radio sta-

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tions announced that I am a spy. Imagine. Me, a spy. The only thing I know is sheep-breeding. I have a master's degree in that."

Bertone confided that it is very lonely for an American along the Oxus. "For months I never see or hear a woman's voice. Oh, there are women there, all right, but you know how Afghans are about their women—always keeping them out of sight." We glanced around at the party. There were dozens of pretty French, Italian, British, and American women there. But there were no Afghan women, though the host was an Afghan who had been educated at Oxford.

A tall Emir with the face of a falcon and wearing a beautifully tailored gray flannel suit came up to me and asked me to play bridge with him and three of his friends. Over the cards, I learned that he was a cabinet minister, a cousin of the King, Zahir Shah, and climbed a mountain every morning to keep fit. This Emir had some ideas on what ought to be done about his troublesome brethren who live on the hopelessly barren land of the Khyber country.

"Obviously the thing to do is transplant Pathans from the southern deserts of our country to the northern, fertile Oxus steppes," he said. "This is not just a plan. We have already started the project. We give each Pathan pioneer fifteen acres of land and enough money for an adobe hut, a plow, and a bullock."

The Uzbeks who lived along the Afghan bank of the Oxus, facing fellow Uzbeks on the northern, Russian bank, were good law-abiding farmers—but not sharpshooters. The Emir agreed that perhaps the Uzbeks and the Pathans could teach each other a few things.

The Pathans from the desert were being resettled near the ruins of ancient Bactria, "the mother of cities," across the Hindu Kush. In her prime, Bactria lay on the old Silk Route from China to the Mediterranean. Then the city was busy with caravans, hauling the ivory and silk, scents, and spices of the Orient, to the Greeks, the Romans, and then the Cru-



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saders. Now Bactria was the delight of French archaeologists, who were busy finding her treasures under centuries of sand.

I hinted to this intelligent Emir that I would like to meet some Afghan ladies. To that remark there was no response whatever. The subject of women was not to be discussed at a Paghman international garden-bridge party.

The Afghan women wearing *burquas* in the streets and bazaars of Kabul completely ignored me, as if I were some sort of neuter gender. Ambassador Merrell tried to discourage my interest in Afghan women. He took me to a huge, white palace, deserted.

"King Ammanullah of Afghanistan used to live here. One day he ordered the Afghan women to strip off their *burquas* and show their faces. They didn't want to, they said. No, really. Their husbands and the mullahs sent Ammanullah fleeing down the canyons into exile. Ammanullah lives in Rome now. He's been living there since 1828, regretting that he told Afghan women what to do."

I talked Weller into seeing the leading mullah in Afghanistan, Abdul Djelil, a respected Islamic scholar. I wanted to know what he thought of *burquas*, but it would not have been cricket for an unveiled woman to call on Mullah Djelil uninvited. After all, he was the local equivalent of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

To Weller, Mullah Abdul Djelil was very emphatic on the subject of *burquas*. "The Prophet ordained that women are free to show their faces and hands," he said. "This wearing of the veil has nothing to do with religion or morals. It is simply an old custom we got from the Arabs, and I, personally, think we ought to forget about it. The main question is: who will unveil first?"

I am not an ardent feminist. It seems to me women yell loudest for equal rights in countries where they already have more than a fair share of privileges, such as exemption from military service and alimony. If Afghan women themselves

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didn't want to vote, help run their governments, or show their faces in public, I decided not to worry about them, though they were obviously not using their majority sensibly.

Another strange thing about Afghanistan was the way the Russian radio stations—in Stalinabad, Leninabad, Molotovobad, Kaganovichabad, Mikoyanabad, Vorishilovobad, and Kirovobad—avoided attacking Zahir Shah and the tight royal clique that ruled the country. Then we learned why—the Afghan Government had agreed to hire Russian technical assistants, too, to balance the Americans building dams in the south. The Russians knew just how they wanted to help the Afghan economy—by building gasoline-storage tanks on the south bank of the Oxus. The Afghans consented because their new agricultural settlements and cotton mills along the Oxus desperately needed gas, which comes across the shallow stream from Russia in tin cans strung on the backs of camels. Of course, gasoline-storage tanks on Afghan soil would be useful if the Russians drove south, toward the oily coast of the Arabian Sea. But Afghans were not worried; they kept their American construction company building a dam in the south, and the Russians building gas-storage tanks in the north. Afghanistan continued to be that wonderful rarity, an independent buffer state.

When we returned to the Peshawar Club, the young Australian truck salesman asked us if we would like to follow the route of Alexander the Great to the Indus River. "Good publicity stunt for my trucks," he said. "I hear Alexander's route is the Grand Trunk Highway now."

"Good idea," replied Weller. "But wait until I get a copy of the stories written by that reporter who happened to be along with Alexander, in 326 B. C."

"Are you kidding?" asked the Australian.

"No," said Weller. "Alexander did have a Greek along who wrote all about his trip to the Indus. I forget his name, but someone at the Peshawar museum might know."

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The Pakistani archaeologist at the Peshawar museum thought a while, polishing his spectacles. "I know the Greek you mean, Mr. Weller. Yes, he wrote an extraordinarily detailed account. However, I do not think there is a copy of his reporting, as you call it, in Peshawar."

He went to his library and presented us with a book called *Five Thousand Years in Pakistan*, by Dr. R. E. M. Wheeler.\* "Wheeler's British and absolutely accurate. He used ancient Greek sources to write this book. Take it and use it. Have a good time."

We rolled along a smooth, asphalt highway built by the British, which now connects the northern cities, arsenals, and airfields of Pakistan. "There's the Indus," shouted the Australian.

A broad, muddy river lay in front of us. On its bank was a red stone fort. Weller opened the book. "Nope, that's not a Greek fort. It was built by the Moghuls 1700 years later." We climbed out of the truck and stood on the bank of the Indus. Weller read what the learned Dr. Wheeler had gleaned from ancient Greek sources.

"One day in the year 326 B. C. Alexander the Great of Macedon stood on the western bank of the Indus at the head of a motley army that had fought its way with him half across Asia. It was ragged and patched, laden with a vast assortment of loot, perennially hungry. Its leader stood awhile and surveyed the scene, his head set a little aslant on a sturdy neck and framed with stormy hair . . . as far as eye could see stretched a seething mass of grunting oxen and bleating sheep, more than 10,000 of them; and amongst them towered some 30 elephants, gay with paint and trappings and clanging with tasselled bells. In the foreground stood a small, brightly apparelled group, flanked by squadron after squadron

\* London: The Royal India and Pakistan Society.

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of fluttering horsemen. Alexander sent to know their purpose.

"Word was brought back that an embassy awaited him from the King of Taxila, some 40 miles away . . . the king wished to submit the surrender of his metropolis and kingdom and, as evidence of good faith, had added 200 talents of silver and this assortment of cattle. Then and there the Macedonian offered thanksgiving to his gods and a festival to his troops."

Alexander and his archers crossed the Indus in thirty-oared galleys and boats thoughtfully provided by the King of Taxila. We crossed on a steel bridge, provided by the King of England. To the disappointment of the Greeks and the Weller, Taxila turned out to be only a maze of haphazard streets with walls of stones put together in a slapdash way. Even the city hall was only a crude building of rough limestone blocks. Alexander's men, remembering the marble cities of their homeland, and the glorious palace they had destroyed at Persepolis, saw no point in going further.

Dr. Wheeler informed us that Taxila was indeed poor in architecture, but was rich in philosophers, in 326 B. C. Then a sage approached Alexander.

"He threw down on the ground a dry and shriveled hide and planted his foot on the edge of it. But when it was trodden down in one place, it started up everywhere else. He then walked all around it and showed that the same thing took place wherever he trod until at length he stepped in the middle, and by so doing made it all lie flat. This symbol was intended to show Alexander that he should control his empire from the center, and not wander away to extremities."

Weller closed the book. "That sage sounds like an isolationist I know."

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"And then Alexander turned back to Greece?" asked the enthralled Australian.

"Yes. But he died in approximately the center of his empire, in Babylon, and never saw his Macedonian home again."

We drove on to Rawalpindi, a city which garrisoned the troops of the last Western king to rule the Indus plains. They left behind banks, bookstores, pharmacies, schools, hotels, and the "Durand Line," the boundary of Pakistan which encloses Pathans.

When the Pakistan Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, made a speech in Rawalpindi, October 16, 1951, a Pathan shot him off his feet. The audience beat the assassin to death, but on his body police found the equivalent of \$4000 and his name, Sayad Akhbar, a poor tribesman from Afghanistan's southern desert. Liaquat was buried with a state funeral. The new Prime Minister of Pakistan was sworn in, and there were speeches to calm the people. But Pakistanis still believe Afghans paid Sayad Akhbar \$4000 to shoot Liaquat for the Pushtunistan that has to be carved out of Pakistan.

And I still wonder whether Pushtunistan is the reason a slim, dark Pakistani Major, who fought Pathans and was afraid of snakes, was bitten by a cobra in his bungalow at the Peshawar Club.



## XII

### Two Kashmirs

ONE September morning in 1851, Weller and I boarded a Pakistan Government plane bound for Gilgit, a trading post in northern Kashmir. Weller had a theory that foreign correspondents who worked for special papers, rather than news agencies, ought to stay out of capitals and search for stories off the beaten track. Gilgit, near the unmarked, mountainous frontier where China, Russia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan meet, was Weller's idea of a place off the beaten track. The only American writers who had seen Gilgit since the British left were Margaret Parton of the *New York Herald Tribune* and Justice William O. Douglas, who was gathering material for his book: *Beyond the High Himalayas*.

For an hour our plane was surrounded by white woolly clouds and we saw nothing at all, though our altimeter read 15,000 feet. The only other passenger, a fat, sixtyish Pakistani nurse, was lying on her face over a sack of wheat, motionless with fright.

"Don't worry," said our graying pilot, an ex-R. A. F. man. "We'll find an opening through this stuff sooner or later. I've been flying this route every day for six months and I haven't bumped into anything yet." Ten minutes later the wind

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swept open a jagged, blue keyhole. Pilot Ronald Milsom dived through it. We found ourselves skinning by steely mountains caked with ice. Milsom pointed out Nanga Parbat, the 26,000-foot "Naked Lady" who had killed thirty-one European mountain climbers who tried to conquer her. In a canyon leading off to our right, we spied a tiny silver minnow.

"There goes Maxie," said Milsom, "on his way to Skardu." We had met Maxie just before takeoff. He was a blue-eyed Pole, Captain Jan Maksymowicz, who preferred piloting down uncharted Himalayan canyons to living in his Communist homeland. Maxie was the most famous member of the tiny foreign legion of pilots hired by the Pakistan Government to bring supplies to new airfields on mountain ledges, near Russia, China, and Tibet. Maxie was the first man to land a plane at Skardu.

"If you think this trip to Gilgit is petrifying," said our pilot, "you should try flying to Skardu some day." I vowed never to fly to Skardu.

The wind, funneling through the canyons, threw our plane up and down as if it were a pingpong ball. When the clouds weren't smothering us, we caught terrifying glimpses of walls of rock, snow, and ice—a few feet from the tips of our wings. "We can't take any wrong turns around here," said Milsom complacently. "There isn't enough room to turn around." Suddenly Milsom dived through a peephole of blue sky. "There it is," he yelled triumphantly. "Gilgit." He pointed to a mile-long strip of pebbles along the bank of a green river—the headwaters of the Indus.

Milsom set us down without a jar and the old nurse shook herself, surprised she was still alive. We climbed out and helped unload our cargo of wheat, kerosene, jeeps, shovels, and woolen blankets.

"I've got to take off right away," said Milsom, scanning the sky. "I can't waste any time here today with these clouds—stiff as they are with rocks." He climbed back into his empty

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plane, used a few yards to get off the ground, and disappeared round a bend of the Indus, bound for Rawalpindi.

A Pakistani soldier came up and politely asked us who we were. Weller pulled a letter out of his pocket, addressed to Sardar Mohammed Alam Khan, the Pakistan Government's administrator in Gilgit.

"Very well, sir and madam," he said in English. "This way to my jeep." We drove over a British-built bridge spanning the icy river, past neat stone houses with fruit trees in their yards. There was a playing field with goalposts and a flagpole. "Gilgit Boys' School," our driver explained. We climbed a little hill, turned into a circular drive laid out in a garden, and stopped under the porte-cochere of a typical English country house.

Sardar Mohammed Alam Khan turned out to be a Pathan, born in the Khyber country, who was wearing a pin-striped blue business suit and working at a desk piled high with accounting books. "Welcome to Gilgit." He smiled. "I don't get many visitors here. I am delighted to see you." He led us to a chintzy guest room and told us lunch would be served in fifteen minutes.

After an excellent lunch of curried lamb, Sardar smoked a bubble pipe and explained why he was in Gilgit. "I have an education in law and administration," he said with a British accent. "I've been here four years. I took over the day the last British political officer left Gilgit."

Sardar was a big, burly son of a Pathan chief, with a handlebar mustache, a love of Anglo-Saxon law books, and a determination to get things done.

"I took one look at Gilgit and these snowy passes connecting it with the rest of the world," Sardar said. "I decided we needed an airfield here. By grabbing a shovel myself, I got a thousand mountaineers to work voluntarily building the airstrip along the Indus. The first planes brought road-building equipment, then jeeps. We built the highest jeepable road in



## *XII. Two Kashmirs*

the world—over the Babusar Pass. It is open four months of the year—13,700 feet high."

When the British ruled Gilgit, it had only thirty scruffy shops selling tea, silk, copper pots, and rough, homespun cotton which came by caravan from China. Now, in the air age, there were some 300 buildings of wood and stone, selling American breakfast food, U. S. Army surplus blankets, disinfectants, flashlights, and lipsticks. There was a new inn with phonograph music, and a new hospital with X-ray equipment. The Pakistani nurse who came up on the plane with us went to work training Gilgit girls to administer hypodermics and change bandages.

As we walked around Gilgit's bazaar, a sturdy girl swung by with a huge stack of firewood on her back, but stout, new brown shoes on her feet.

Sardar looked at her a moment, laughing. "Isn't it amusing to see how even the Gilgit men spend money on their women these days? When I first came here every female went barefoot until the snow came. Then she tied her feet in rags."

Now that we had seen what civilization brought to Gilgit, Sardar thought we ought to learn about Gilgit's contribution to civilization. We were taken to the town's weekly polo game. Polo, Sardar explained, was invented by the Kashmiris, then filtered down to the plains of India where it was "adapted" by the British and turned into a gentlemanly pastime. In Gilgit we would see how polo ought to be played.

The field was about fifty feet wide and three hundred feet long, enclosed by low stone walls. Six small, shaggy ponies were lined up on each side of the field with riders sporting gay-nineties mustaches. When Sardar threw in the wooden ball, the horses started down the field. A mountaineer caught the ball with his left hand while riding off at full gallop for the opposite goal. The six players on the opposing team stopped him by grabbing onto his neck. When the ball carrier seemed to be choking to death, he dropped the ball. We

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heard the smash of either mallets or heads. Then the ball careened off a stone wall, another rider caught it, and galloped off. The game turned into wrestling and strangling again. The only rule I could discover was that riders were not allowed to leave their horses.

The game lasted two hours and had only three five-minute rest periods. After it was over, we were panting from the high altitude, but the polo ponies and their riders were ready to trot back to their homes, as much as twenty miles away.

That night we were invited to the Gilgit Garrison Officers' Club, where the members wore dinner jackets and spoke in Oxford accents. The main topic of conversation was the Mintaka Pass, 15,400 feet high, which connects Pakistan with Communist China. Our hosts told us the Pass was marked with five stone pillars—and the skeletons of ponies which had died trying to cross with refugees from the Russo-Chinese province of Sinkiang the winter before.

"The Mintaka Pass," said a Captain, "is the main corridor through the Himalayan barrier still unconquered by Marx." The Gilgit Garrison thought sealing up the valleys of northern Kashmir, as the British did, was cheaper and far more sensible than Sardar's "dreams." The officers believed the new road over the Babusar Pass, leading south to the plains, was an invitation to the Chinese Communists. "Besides, screens and indoor toilets and stone houses for Gilgit cost a lot of Pakistani tax money and these mountaineers might have been satisfied with mud huts for a few more decades."

Sardar's double-turned mustache bristled at such talk. "Northern Kashmir must be a place of good living," he said. "Unless we give them a better life, why would these mountaineers want Pakistan governing them?" He asserted the fundamental need of any military base is its acceptance by the civilian population. "Otherwise we might have to fight the inhabitants here as well as an invading enemy." We were inclined to agree with Sardar, thinking of the Suez Canal and South Korea,

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Sardar drove us over a handhewn road, winding in dizzy spirals toward the Chinese Communist border one hundred miles away. Where the road ended, we watched Pakistani soldiers transferring their field rations, machine guns, and mortars onto the backs of ponies. The platoon was headed for Kalimdarchi, a lonely village of half a dozen huts on the eternally snowy trail leading to the Mintaka Pass. No airplanes can supply Kalimdarchi; it is a chimney on the roof of the world. Weller suddenly decided he wanted to ride up to Kalimdarchi, too, because Marco Polo had been there. All horses dislike me intensely and Gilgit's gamy ponies were no exception. My beast balked and threw me within three minutes. Weller trotted off, nevertheless.

"*Salaam aleikim*," called Sardar after him. "Peace be with you."

"*Salaam aleikim*," replied Weller. "Don't let my wife talk your arm off."

As we jeeped back to Gilgit, Sardar pointed out the sites where there would soon be hydroelectric plants, if he had his way. "There are enough powerful streams in these canyons to light up all the towns in the Himalayas. It is ridiculous—Gilgit still using kerosene lamps with all this falling water around. All we need is a few generators and turbines." He pointed to a silvery waterfall cascading over a cliff a thousand feet above us. "Think of the electricity that would make!"

Back at Sardar's residence, we found Dr. John Clark, a geologist from St. Charles, Ill. Clark was a one-man "humanitarian foundation" who had founded a boys' school in Hunza, forty pony-miles north of Gilgit. Clark spent his spare time hunting for minerals in the unmapped glaciers. He turned his knapsack upside down and dumped some of his specimens on a table.

"Gold?" asked Sardar, inspecting a dirty, greenish-brown rock.

Clark nodded *yes* in a disinterested way. "The world has

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enough gold," he said. "I was looking for something more useful." He picked up a rock and fondled it. "Nice quartz." Clark explained to me that he was looking for minerals so that the people of Hunza would have a source of income besides scratching stony soil on mountainsides.

Hunza is famous among food faddists as a Shangri-La populated by vegetarians, supermen free of disease. I asked Clark about that.

"The doctor who started the legend about Hunza never went there," Clark scolded. "Hunza people have no cancer, no heart disease, and no stomach ulcers. Everything else they have double. They are vegetarians only because there is no meat up there. Oh, sure, a few goats, but not enough for everybody."

Clark peered at me over his gold-rimmed spectacles. "What is true, is that Hunza is the only pocket of quasi-pure Aryans in the world. The people have kept their racial characteristics because they live in a mountain-locked valley. Many of them have gray eyes and brown or reddish hair." Clark himself was a prime example of an Aryan after 4,000 years of civilization. His thin no-color hair barely covered his high, intellectual dome. His shoulders were hunched with years of study and his wispy body seemed suited only for sitting in a classroom. Actually Clark was wiry and tough from years of sleeping on a floor and practicing hardihood.

Clark confessed that he was really "a fugitive from the fossilized raccoon—the subject of my doctor's thesis at Princeton."

I asked what had made him leave Princeton.

"The U. S. Army," replied Clark. "During the war I made a trip over the Mintaka Pass, while scouting for a new supply route to China. I saw Hunza and fell in love with it. I went back after the war because I want to help the Hunza people."

At dinner that night Clark ate five or six helpings ravenously, explaining that he hadn't had a full meal for several

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months. "I am always a little hungry up there in Hunza," he said. Now that Clark had an English-speaking audience again, he couldn't stop talking for a moment. I thought conversation had been his main hunger.

"Hunzas are devout Muslims of the Aga Khan's sect," related Clark. "I am trying to keep Rita Hayworth's divorce a secret from them. Prince Ali Khan is revered as a direct descendant of the Prophet up there."

Sardar drew noisily on his bubble pipe; evidently he did not appreciate frivolous discussions of the sects of Islam. I had noticed that some of Clark's offhand remarks about Christian principles and Christian ethics irritated Sardar. What Clark meant, actually, were principles and ethics common to most religions. But out of habit, the Christian adjective was tacked on. Clark seemed unaware that such talk might be offensive to devout Muslims, like Sardar. I remembered the Voice of America broadcasts I had heard quoting American politicians talking about the "Christian crusade against Communism." Did such careless use of the word "Christian" infuriate the Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist listeners we were trying to win? To my relief, Clark got over to science.

"Sir, I meant to mention something. I am absolutely certain the glaciers are shrinking. I have been measuring them carefully for three years. They are shrinking rapidly, alarmingly. Within another fifty years the plains of Pakistan and India are going to be more parched, and the people hotter and thirstier than they are now."

Sardar explained to me that the life-giving water for the plains of India and Pakistan is born in Kashmir, and that was one reason why the two countries were fighting for it so tenaciously.

Clark went back to the subject of Hunza, his obsession. "One evening when I was on a high glacier looking for minerals, a boy, clothed in uncured goatskins, wandered near my campfire. The Hunza guides I was with tried him with half a

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dozen local dialects, but he understood none of them. Finally someone tried Tajik, and the boy was able to answer. When the moon came up the boy led us to a tiny shelter among the rocks where he lived with his father, a goatherd who had been separated from the rest of the clan a few months before. They couldn't get back because snow had buried the trail. The father and the boy were from the Russian side of the mountains, from Soviet Tajikistan."

Sardar stared at him. Clark answered the unasked question. "No, I am sure they were just goatherds, as they said they were. Little more than animals themselves. There was no indication of intelligence in their manner of movement, or speaking, or in their eyes."

Clark stood up and said he had told his last story. He had to get back to Gilgit's inn. He was leaving in the morning for Hunza; he had come down to town only to pick up some winter supplies. "Well, *salaam aleikim*, good-bye," he said, flickering his flashlight down the trail leading to the inn.

"A lonely man and misunderstood by the Hunza people," murmured Sardar. "They think there must be some peculiar reason an educated man would devote his life to running a boy's school on a cold mountaintop."

The next morning Sardar asked me to teach him Canasta. A pack of cards had come up on the plane with us. After half an hour of instruction, the Khan beat me at two-handed Canasta ten games a day every day for five days.

When we weren't playing Canasta, we listened to the radio. Nehru's speeches made Sardar choke, but he always listened to them. One day we heard All-India Radio say Gilgit was ruled by marauding tribesmen from Pakistan. Sardar roared: "Mrs. Weller, you go to Nehru and tell him you were the house-guest of the chief marauding tribesman in Gilgit. Tell him all about my marauding!" He slammed his accounting book on the table. "If spending all this money here is marauding, I'm—" He checked himself and returned to his comforting bubble pipe, making it boil with indignation.

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Sardar arranged an entertainment for me and invited everybody in Gilgit, determined that I would meet every "marauding tribesman" in the area. A military organization called the Gilgit Scouts gave a dance performance, dressed in masks and Halloween costumes. The dances consisted of vigorous re-enactments of witch stories. All the wifches were very funny, apparently. The audience rocked with laughter. As their final number, the Gilgit Scouts danced an imitation of the Kashmiris who lived down south, in the famous Vale of Kashmir. I gathered that Gilgit Kashmiris considered themselves as State-of-Mainers and the Valley people as Dixiecrats.

"These Gilgit Scouts are the reason northern Kashmir happens to be ruled by Pakistan instead of Nehru," Sardar said. "Gilgit is 98 per cent Muslim, and when the Hindu troops came in here, after the British left, the Scouts hauled out their hundred-year-old muskets and sprayed them with garnets."

"Garnets?"

"Yes, garnets. The British didn't leave any ammunition behind so the Scouts used garnets from Hunza. Clark himself said they weren't good for anything else. Full of flaws."

"The Hindus won't dare come back here," added the Pakistani Major in charge of the Gilgit Scouts. "The Scouts are the best militia in all the Himalayas. And they have ammunition, now."

Gilgit's Boys' School had its annual "Honors Day" while I was Sardar's house-guest. For the occasion, the Khan put on an inspiring turban made of yards of starched, pale-blue gauze. He surveyed my slacks and suggested I change into "something more dressy." I, too, had to attend "Honors Day" ceremonies. We jeeped down to the school's playing field, which now had a new grandstand decorated with bunting and Pakistani flags. It was full of proud Gilgit fathers. All the proud Gilgit mothers sat on the ground, far behind. The women were not veiled; they had handsome faces with

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ruddy cheeks and hazel eyes. I told Sardar I would rather sit with the women than in the all-male grandstand.

"No, no, the plans are all made," he replied. "You are going to sit in the seat of honor, at my right. You are going to hand out all the prizes to Gilgit's scholars and athletes." The prizes I handed out were very practical ones—cans of cheese, toothbrushes, soap, writing tablets, books. Sardar told me the name of each honored boy and the Urdu words for "congratulations, well done." The boys bowed to me as they accepted the prizes and whispered *salaam aleikim*. The mothers on the sidelines and the fathers in the grandstand beamed. Apparently I was the only one who thought it odd an American female was handing out the prizes at Gilgit Boys' School "Honors Day."

"We respect Americans here," was all Sardar would say in explanation. Gilgit did not have a girls' school, but Sardar assured me he was working on the project.

After a week, Weller came back from the mountains. He had to ride three days to get only as far as Hunza. At the rate he was going—fifteen miles a day—it would have taken him a month to get to Kalimdarchi. "I had to abandon the idea of following Marco Polo," he said. "After all, Marco Polo didn't work for a daily newspaper."

Weller was satisfied northern Kashmir was the safest borderland in the world. "Soft black shale sprinkles down the mountainsides all the time. A shot could start an avalanche. Some of the trails are only a yard wide, with a sheer mountain on one side and a drop of 2,000 feet on the other."

"My dear Weller," murmured Sardar, "Genghis Khan decided 800 years ago that he could not take his Mongol cavalry through northern Kashmir. He went further west, to Afghanistan, rather than cross the Himalayas here. Let us put our faith in the mountains and Allah who made them. Canasta, anybody?"

But it was time for the news broadcast from India, an event Sardar never missed. He switched on the radio just in



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time to hear an Indian announcer say Nehru had demanded plebiscites in the European colonies still on India's soil—French Pondicherry and Portuguese Goa. "Sure, sure," exploded Sardar. "Nehru demands plebiscites everywhere—everywhere but in the Kashmir Valley." He turned the radio off and went back to his comforting bubble pipe. The division of Kashmir by two opposing armies was a thorn Sardar lived with every day, but he disliked losing his urbane reasonableness. After he had bubbled off his anger, he continued the conversation: "Nehru knows he can't win a free plebiscite in the Kashmir Valley with 80 per cent of the people Muslim. Nehru says religion shouldn't matter; Kashmir should be secular. But the fact is, religion does affect politics, when it represents two entirely different ways of life, like Hindu and Muslim."

The Pakistan and Indian Armies faced each other across a cease-fire line drawn across Kashmir's mountains. It was patrolled by Americans, Belgians, and Dutch, wearing United Nations emblems, who whizzed around in white jeeps to see that the peace was kept. The United Nations observers would not allow us, or anyone else, to cross the shaky cease-fire line. We could reach the disputed Kashmir Valley only by flying back to Pakistan, transferring to an Indian plane bound for New Delhi: filling out application blanks at the Indian Ministry of the Interior, and boarding an Indian plane bound for Srinagar. This detour took three weeks.

Srinagar is built on canals and is usually described as the "Venice of Asia." Its famous gondolas, called *shikaras*, were lined up at Dal Gate, waiting for customers. I had seen those *shikaras* during World War II, when I was a Red Cross girl visiting Kashmir. Then they had names like *Mae West*, *full spring seats*, or *Minney-ha-ha*, or *Love Nest*. They were piled high with mattresses and plump cushions, discreetly canopied. The G.I.'s thought them the most wonderful invention since the wheel led to the parked automobile. Now the *shikaras* were far more subdued, and they bore names like *Shal-*

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*imar Rose or Lotus Dream.* The equally famous fleet of Kashmir houseboats also bore new names: *Mon Repos*, instead of *My Blue Heaven*.

But we soon learned that Kashmiri houseboats had not changed much in the last eight years. Our crew still consisted of a bearer, a cook, a boy to empty the potties, a laundress, an errand boy, and six women "helpers." Our houseboat was poled to the tip of a peninsula extending into Dal Lake, where willows bent over the glassy water, reflecting the snowy Himalayas. Lily pads stretched away from the front veranda. We had been enjoying the view about five minutes, when a window slid open and a dark face rose from the water. "Haircut, sahib," said a barber, climbing into the window. Weller convinced him he did not need a haircut. Then a disembodied voice asked us if we knew Congressman James Loblolly from Washington. Weller roared *no*. "Mrs. Loblolly," the voice continued, "bought two pairs hand-embroidered underwears from me." The merchant advanced from the dining room, carrying a pair of enormous peach-silk panties embroidered with lavender hearts.

Weller summoned Abdul, our bearer, and impressed upon him that we needed peace and privacy because we had a lot of work to do. Abdul smirked; it was plain he didn't think we needed privacy because of work.

As Weller sat in the bathtub, a Kashmiri stepped into the room and asked: "What about Mr. Jordan, famous oil expert from Arabia?" Correspondent Weller forgot himself and asked what about him. "Read what he says about tweed suit I made him," replied the Kashmiri, drawing a crumpled letter from his pocket.

We fled to our *shikara* and had our gondolier paddle us through the lily pads to the Shalimar Gardens and the lovely Moghul pavilions designed by the builders of the Taj Mahal. The terraced gardens were yellow and orange with autumn blossoms and the chinar trees were softly shedding their copper leaves. The fountains, dry this time of the year,

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seemed melancholy ghosts. A dark-skinned Indian wearing a white turban, gray flannel slacks, and a plaid shirt, sat in the lacy, arched doorway of one of the Moghul summerhouses, dreaming. Later we learned that he was one of the princes who had been stripped of power and wealth by the Indian Government after the British left. He made Srinagar his home now and went to the Shalimar Gardens every evening "to think."

During World War II, some 50,000 American G.I.'s visited the Kashmir Valley and nearly every one of them bought "a real star sapphire" or a snow-leopard coat. Now the merchants of Srinagar—Subhana the Worst, Cheap John, and Suffering Moses—sat outside their shops with grief-stricken eyes. Suffering Moses, who made a fortune during the war by weeping the loudest over a bargain, complained that he was bankrupt. "Nobody to buy," he whined, pointing to his stacks of Kashmiri shawls, heavy turquoise jewelry from Tibet, carved walnut nutcrackers, and platters of painted papier-mâché. Kashmiri merchants are always unburdening what they call their "Kashmiri hearts," and we listened for several hours. The main complaint against India was Srinagar's new "Emporium" where tourists can buy all the Valley's lovely handicraft at fixed prices. Kashmiri merchants can't bear fixed prices—bargaining is their favorite entertainment.

We headed for Nedou's Hotel, which was expecting a visiting "cultural delegation" from Communist China. The manager paced the lobby, worried. The cultural delegation was due at noon and it was already getting dark. He had called up the airport; no planes had crashed that day. We paced the floor with the manager for three hours. Then Kashmiri politicians drifted in and said they didn't know what had happened to the Chinese Communist cultural delegation either.

Finally Sheikh Abdullah, the ruler of the Kashmir Valley, strode in wearing a magnificent Kashmiri robe of honey-colored wool, embroidered with emerald peacocks. Sheikh Abd-

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ullah confessed that he, too, was puzzled over the non-appearance of the Chinese Communists. We thought they should have sent a telegram canceling their visit, inasmuch as they were a cultural delegation.

"We will have the entertainment, anyway," said the Sheikh. We followed him, and his entourage, including his pretty Anglo-Indian wife, in a gold sari, and his two handsome young sons. A large hall in the hotel was laid out with rows of chairs and a stage. Weller and I plumped ourselves down in the upholstered seats reserved for the Chinese Communists, but nobody seemed to mind. The lights went out; the curtains on the stage parted, revealing a white sheet.

"We are going to see a shadow play, typical Kashmir theater," whispered an Indian correspondent sitting near us. The shadow of Uncle Sam appeared behind the white sheet. He was unmistakable in high silk hat and striped trousers, carrying money bags. Uncle Sam tossed out coins to the shadows of British tommies. Then the British tommies shot down the shadows of Kashmiri peasants. A girl commentator with a sweet voice announced in English that we were seeing "the beginning of the misery of Kashmir's people." The time portrayed, she said, was the 1830's, "when the American imperialists supported the British imperialists in Kashmir." Neither Weller nor I could restrain a gasp of astonishment at such a crude lie. In the first place, Americans were not in the habit of handing out money to the British in the 1830's, during the depression. Usually anti-American propaganda in India was far more subtle than this.

During the second act we watched scenes of Kashmir during World War II. The shadows of G.I.'s shot down the shadows of more Kashmiri peasants who rolled around in agony. "The lovely Vale of Kashmir wanted only peace," continued the pretty voice, "but the American Army tried to establish military bases here." I thought of all the G.I.'s I had seen in the Kashmir Valley. They, too, would be surprised to learn that they had been establishing military bases. They

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had been so busy making love in *shikaras* and spending money at Suffering Moses's that the idea never entered their heads. The Kashmir Valley, then, was just about the only peaceful playground left in Asia, and the G.I.'s wanted it to stay that way.

During the scenes portraying Kashmir in the 1850's, the shadows of peasants, marching proudly, crossed and re-crossed the screen. A chorus broke out in a stirring Kashmiri song, and the lights went on. "Kashmir is determined not to become another Korea," said the girl commentator. "The Kashmir people reject all American attempts to make us another sad South Korea." Not a word about the American aid to India which was being funneled, also, into the Kashmir Valley. The Indian correspondent smiled at us.

"The Kashmir Valley's propaganda bureau prepared this shadow play," he said. "It did go rather far, didn't it?"

Sheikh Abdullah, about six and a half feet tall, stooped over and shook our hands. He welcomed us to the Kashmir Valley and said all the polite things without seeming at all embarrassed that Americans had witnessed a show prepared for Chinese Communists.

As we filed out of the hotel, the Indian correspondent joined us and confided that the Chinese cultural delegation had decided not to come because a ragged band of Kazakh refugees from Sinkiang had just arrived in Srinagar, after a six months' trek over the Himalayas. Apparently the Chinese Communists thought they might be embarrassed by the ragged refugees from their homeland.

The next morning we went in search of the Kazakhs in a delightful way, paddling through the canals of Srinagar, past boats laden to the water level with unhusked rice, charcoal, cabbages, and fruit. The barges were poled by Kashmiri women with huge silver hoops in their ears. The menfolk relaxed on deck, smoking bubble pipes. Nimble-fingered artisans sat in the sun on the banks of the canals, embroidering, and spinning the precious Kashmir wool made from the un-

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derdown of goats. Here and there we spied buildings of exquisite proportions, glinting with millions of bits of inlaid mirror and colored stones. They were built some 300 years ago, when the Moghul emperors of India made Srinagar their summer capital. Kashmir's Muslim religion, too, dated from those days. The first Moghul emperors, fanatical tribal chiefs from Central Asia, converted Kashmir in the name of Mohammed by smashing idols, by fire, and by the sword. After the Moghuls grew soft and decadent and were supplanted by the British, most of the Kashmiris stayed converted.

As if aware of my Moghulish thoughts, Weller remarked that the Kazakhs we were going to see were also Muslims from Central Asia. They, too, stumbled over the mountain trails to the Kashmir Valley, but nowadays they came as refugees instead of conquerors.

We found the Kazakh band camped inside the courtyard of an old caravansary. Amazons wearing fur boots and necklaces of silver coins hovered over cooking-fires, stirring copper caldrons of mutton stew. As soon as the ruddy-faced women spied me, they ran over to inspect my clothes. They felt the sheer wool of my pleated skirt, touched my nylons with respect, and then very gently lifted me off my feet and laid me on the ground. They wanted to study how my stockings stayed up. Scrambling to my feet, I hurried after Weller, in search of the Kazakh chief.

The four sides of the courtyard were lined with stables, full of sheep and goats awaiting slaughter. Above the stables were tiny, cell-like rooms. There we found the Kazakh men, huge creatures with red cheeks and spiky hair smeared with mutton grease. They sat in circles on the floor, wearing fur boots, trousers of rough homespun, and sheepskin jackets. Their eyes were only slightly mongoloid, but they had broad, jutting cheekbones. We tried a few words of Chinese on them, but they shook their heads and answered in a Turkish dialect common to all Central Asia. They fetched their chief,

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an educated young man in his early thirties with pale yellow skin and small, refined features. He wore the coat of an officer in Chiang Kai-shek's Army.

The Kazakh said he was Delal Khan, son of Jenam Khan. I remembered hearing stories of Jenam Khan, one of the most famous of the Kazakh chiefs living in Sinkiang.

"Where is your father now?" I asked.

Delal Khan clenched his fists. "He is dead. The Chinese Communists executed him."

"Why?"

"I must tell my story from the beginning," said Delal Khan. "Only then will you understand." He motioned us to sit on the floor and ordered the Kazakh women to prepare cups of tea.

"There are about a million of us Kazakhs living in Sinkiang, China's most northwestern province," he began. "The name *Kazakh* means free people, in our language. We migrate with camels, sheep, and goats over the desert. We also have cavalymen, so that we can stay free people. There are seven million Kazakhs living in Russia, in the province of Kazakhstan. They are not free people any more." Delal Khan warmed his hands on an earthenware cup of tea and sucked noisily.

"Three years ago Chiang Kai-shek appointed a Kazakh as Governor of Sinkiang. But the Kazakh he chose was a Russian Kazakh. Yes, I am sure. His name is Burhan Shahidi and my father knew him for a long time. Burhan Shahidi was born in Kazan, in Russia, in 1900, and so was his wife."

Delal Khan leaned forward and looked at us with intense eyes. "You must understand this. Burhan Shahidi was a Communist for twenty years. But he did not tell Chiang Kai-shek he was a Communist. That is why Chiang made him Governor." Weller hastily fumbled for his notebook. "Yes," approved Delal Khan, "write down all my words, very exactly, so that other people may know what happened to the Kazakhs of Sinkiang."

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As soon as he was Governor, Burhan Shahidi used the radio of the Russian Consul General in Urumchi, Alexander Sevilov, to broadcast to the Chinese Communists that Sinkiang was ready to surrender.

"Two months later the Chinese Communists arrived at Urumchi, the capital of Sinkiang. We Kazakhs did not fight them. We thought we would see how they treated us first. We migrated to Barkol, where Osman Bator, the greatest Kazakh General, lived with the Kazakh cavalry.

"We Kazakhs stayed away from Urumchi, but we heard through traders that the Communists were shooting all the landowners and teachers there. One day a delegation of twenty Chinese Communists arrived at our camp at Barkol and said Osman Bator and my father had to go to Urumchi for negotiations.

"We Kazakhs said no. We wanted to stay together and not have our leaders in Urumchi and our people in Barkol. We knew the first trick of Communists is to divide a people from its leaders. We sent the Chinese Communist delegation away, saying we Kazakhs wanted to live in peace, and together."

The Kazakhs clustered around us, the women jingling their coin necklaces. Delal Khan asked for silence, and got it immediately.

"Then, in April 1849, a battalion of 800 Communist cavalry attacked us. We were stronger than they. After three days' fighting the Communist Army saw that we were stronger. They went away to get reinforcements.

"The next time the Communists attacked us they had 1200 cavalymen and they used new tactics. They drove away our herds of goats and sheep, trying to starve us into surrender. Then ten tanks—yes, I tell you, they were Russian tanks—came at us from the east. They went in among our horsemen and their turrets sprayed machine-gun fire all over us. Our bullets could not stop the tanks, and we were afraid, and scattered. A Russian fighter plane flew overhead. He did not



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fire at us or bomb us but he directed the tanks to our tents. The tanks mowed our families down and crushed everything we had." Delal Khan covered his eyes for a moment and murmured that he still could see the bodies of the Kazakh men and women mangled by those Russian tanks.

"Some of us got away and headed north for the Altai Mountains, where the tanks could not follow us. We camped there for two months. Then suddenly armies advanced at us from the north, from the east, and from the west, all at the same time." Delal Khan traced a map with a stick, diagramming the battle on the earthen floor. "The enemy coming from the north were Russian Kazakhs; the enemy coming from the east were Mongolians, who are good cavalrymen, too. The Chinese Communists were advancing on us from the west. Only two columns of Kazakhs escaped from that battle—one of eighty men, women, and children headed by Osman Bator, and my column of about one hundred grownups." Delal Khan looked around at his little band, now numbering about sixty adults, and twenty children—born along the way.

"Osman Bator said we should try and slip south, separately. I never saw Osman Bator or any of his band again."

"Do you know what happened to him?"

"I learned yesterday when we arrived here. Urumchi radio has announced that Osman Bator was executed in a public shooting, a month after my father, Jenam Khan. The Communists said Osman Bator and Jenam Khan had been tried by a people's court, but they did not say what they were guilty of."

"Please tell us how your little band got to Kashmir," Weller said. Delal Khan ordered more hot tea and waited until after it was served. A Kazakh child, about a year old, climbed into my lap.

"For more than a year I and my followers zigzagged over the plains of Sinkiang, always heading south, always avoiding villages and roads. Finally we came to the Tibetan border. I decided to take a route over the highest passes because

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we Kazakhs are better horsemen than the Chinese. I thought the Chinese would not dare to follow us.

"But after we were well inside Tibet, I discovered the Chinese Communists were conquering there, too. They laid one trap after another for us in the passes, high up. Our horses stumbled in the snow and many of them died. Some of our women were giving birth and we had to travel slowly. We Kazakhs found passes that are not marked on any maps, and we slipped through."

"Did any of the women die in childbirth?" I asked.

"A few. But none of the babies died," replied Delal Khan.

The Kazakh babies wore nothing from the hips down, so that their mothers would not be bothered with diaper washing. They were red-cheeked and sturdy, with matted, filthy hair. They suckled constantly at the huge breasts of the Kazakh women.

Delal Khan said the last battle of the Kazakhs took place on the Kashmir-Tibet border, within earshot of the Indian border guards. "We Kazakhs were trying to push through the Chosul Pass. The Chinese Communists were catching up with us, shooting, trying to kill us all before we could cross the frontier. We crawled under the bellies of our horses and sheep. The Communists shot our animals, but they wounded only three of us. We got through the Chosul Pass."

For a few days the Kazakhs stayed at Leh, a trading town on the Kashmir-Tibet border. Then Nehru decided to grant the Kazakhs refuge. Nehru knew it might be dangerous to leave them in the border area, providing the Chinese Communists with an excuse to cross. Nehru is also a humanitarian. He refused to hand the Kazakh "bandits" back to the Chinese Communists. The Indian Air Force airlifted the Kazakhs out of Leh and dropped them into Srinagar, where they were housed and fed as guests of the Indian Government.

"None of us Kazakhs got sick on the airplanes that brought us here," said Delal Khan with pride. He thought this more

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remarkable than their six-month flight over the icy roof of the world.

Through Delal Khan, we met another famous Kazakh refugee in Srinagar—Mohammed Emin Boghra, once Deputy-governor of Sinkiang. Boghra also knew the Russian-born Burhan Shahidi well, so well that he fled from Sinkiang as soon as Chiang appointed him Governor. In Srinagar Mohammed Emin Boghra kept his ears glued to a powerful radio, listening to the Chinese Communist broadcasts from Urumchi. It was Boghra who heard the Communists announce that Sinkiang had a new atomic city called Ta-tung-ho, built on a strip of earth that had uranium, fuel, and water. When Sinkiang had its atom-bomb test in July 1951, Mohammed Emin Boghra heard the Chinese Communists blandly announce that the blast was the result of "Chinese and Russian co-operation in the scientific field." He also heard the announcement that Ta-tung-ho was under the direction of a "European atomic scientist" and the slip of a Chinese Communist tongue that indicated the scientist was Bruno Pontecorvo, an Italian who fled to the Soviet Union with valuable atomic information.

Mohammed Emin Boghra wanted a safe, permanent home for the Kazakh refugees of Sinkiang. He negotiated with Turkey, and Kazakhs went to live there—among Turks whose ancestors had also migrated from the plateaus of Central Asia, more than a thousand years before.

After living in the Kashmir Valley three weeks, we had to admit that Sheikh Abdullah was a popular man. One day Sheikh sahib invited us to a tea party. On this occasion he wore a European suit of gray flannel and a cap made of gray caracul. He was cheerful and smiling and spoke to us with a frankness that reminded me strongly of Chou En-lai and which I felt might conceal an equal suppleness.

"The Kashmir Valley cannot hope to be independent," said Sheikh Abdullah. "Look at a map and you see why. Still, the people here should decide to whom they will belong. Yes, I

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think there ought to be a plebiscite. No, I do not think the Indian Army should leave the Valley first. The Indian Army will not influence the people as to how they should vote." Sheikh sahib laughed at our doubtful faces.

As we ate our tea cakes and watched Abdullah greet new guests, a Kashmiri friend sauntered over to us and whispered that Sheikh Abdullah was 'not really boss of the Kashmir Valley. "The real boss is that man over there, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, and I think he is a Communist."

We looked at Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, also a guest of Sheikh Abdullah that afternoon. He was a short, squat man with a bulbous nose, bushy eyebrows, and a bristling mustache. Weller went over to talk to him. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed turned his back and walked away. As we left the party, our friend explained that Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed was very anti-American.

"He started as a Christian missionary and tried to convert the Buddhists at Leh. But missionary work gave him no satisfaction. Next he turned to Gandhi. For a while he lived in an ashram and spun cotton, like a true Gandhi convert. But Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed is not a spiritual man. Gandhi could offer him nothing. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed has always wanted power and position. He turned to Communism. He has allied himself with Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq, a Communist party member who holds Communist cell meetings in his house. Sadiq is now the Development Minister of the Kashmir Valley.

"It is people like Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed who made me turn against Communism," continued our friend. "Bakshi is out for power in whatever way he can get it. He is called the Iron Man, like Stalin, and he has a great talent for organization."

"Such as?"

"Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed is Deputy-governor here in the Kashmir Valley, and his five brothers help him control it absolutely."

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"How?"

Our Kashmiri friend took a long breath. "Brother Bakshi Nabi has a contract with the Indian Government to cut Kashmir's forests. Brother Bakshi Ali has a Government contract to truck the rice from the farmers of the Valley. All rice must be sold to the Government. Brother Bakshi Majjid has a contract to supply wood, charcoal, eggs, meat, and milk to the Indian troops here. Brother Bakshi Rashid is in the police. He tortured me to find out what I know. Brother Bakshi Wali owns a sawmill and flour mill. Together they squeeze the peasants and make a lot of money."

Our friend led us to the New Kashmir Bookshop to show us the speeches of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed and the Communist pamphlets. They were in the same vein. "Kashmir must not become another Korea. . . . Anyone who supports the idea of joining the Kashmir Valley to Pakistan is a running dog of the American imperialists who want to set up air bases here against the Soviet Union and the other countries of the peace camp." The bookshop's other authors were Stalin, Lenin, the Chinese Communist General Chu Teh, and Howard Fast, the American author who won the "Stalin Peace Prize" and said it was the highest honor of our time.

"The Kashmir Valley's Assembly, revenue office, police, and propaganda bureau are all run by known Communists," continued our friend. "I know them. I have known them for a long time. And that is why I am telling you these things."

In August 1953 Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed threw Sheikh Abdullah into Srinagar's jail. "Abdullah," explained Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed slyly, "wanted to make Kashmir another Korea."

Nehru rose in India's Parliament and admitted that his "old comrade of twenty years," Sheikh Abdullah, was in jail and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed was now the official as well as the actual ruler of the Kashmir Valley. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed repaid Nehru and his helpful Indian troops by

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getting the Kashmir Assembly to pass a law joining the sixty-three-mile-long Kashmir Valley to India.

Diplomats around the world nervously scan reports from dreamy Kashmir, wondering who will prove stronger, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed and his Communist friends or Pandit Nehru. Sheikh Abdullah, Nehru's old friend, is still in jail, more than a year after his arrest, and he has not had a trial, though Nehru believes in habeas corpus.



## XIII

### Borders of Tibet

WELLER worked in New Delhi for three weeks and then decided we ought to head for the backwoods again. A favorite story circulating at New Delhi's dinner tables concerned a caravan of Tibetan pilgrims passing down a narrow ledge, bound for Nepal, the birthplace of Buddha. Their ponies were laden with old bronze Buddha heads, to be taken to a shrine for blessing. One of the ponies missed his footing and fell. As a Buddha head hit the rocks, it broke into neat halves, revealing a Geiger counter.

"I cannot swear to the truth of this story," our host told us. "But the point is—does Tibet have uranium in quantity? A great many responsible people here believe that it does. And Russian and Chinese scientists, disguised as Buddhist pilgrims, are busy finding it."

Weller decided that Nepal, on the Tibetan border, might prove interesting and in November 1951 we loaded a commercial plane for Khatmandu, the capital. Our fellow passengers were Indian advisers for Nepal's new Government, salesmen, and a dozen of the tough little slant-eyed mercenary soldiers known to the world as Gurkhas. The Gurkhas, whose favorite weapon is the long *kukri* knife, had been

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fighting for the British in Malaya and now were on home leave for the first time in five years.

We left India's scorched plains and started to climb over wooded foothills. Our pretty Indian stewardess, wearing a gray chiffon sari, walked down the aisle, murmuring in English:

"In about five minutes you will be able to see Mount Everest to our right." She carried a box of American chewing gum and advised us to yawn regularly. "Mount Everest to the right now." Three peaks stood out among the icy pinnacles. "Everest is in the middle of the three," she said in a thoroughly bored tone.

The Gurkhas pressed their snub noses against the panes and waved at Everest as we banked into a landing pattern. "Mount Everest, half in Tibet, half in Nepal," murmured the hostess, walking the aisle. "Now fasten your seat belts, please, we're coming into Khatmandu."

The passengers ignored her, awed by Everest and the white plume of cloud flowing from her icy tip.

"Passengers, puh-lease, fasten your seat belts, we are descending very rapidly." Our ears ached and pounded. We were still strapping ourselves in when we bumped over an unpaved strip and drew up before Khatmandu's air terminal, a tent standing in an empty field. Small, squat Nepalese, wearing white cotton jodhpurs, tweed jackets, and white nightcaps, took our passports and waved us on to the customs officials sitting in the tent. Lovely little women with tiny diamonds inlaid in their noses, wearing brilliant silk saris, rushed up to the Gurkhas as they climbed out of the plane. Though their faces were radiant with wifely welcome, they pressed their palms together in the respectful, prayer-like Hindu greeting and bowed their heads. Not one Gurkha lost control and touched his wife in public.

We climbed into a battered taxi that had been a luxurious sports car twenty-five years before, and drove past mud houses with clods of dung drying on their walls for fuel.



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Then we passed enormous stone palaces, imitations of Versailles and Schönbrunn, with fountains and elaborate formal gardens.

"Rana palaces," explained our driver. "Now Ranas finish." He pointed to another palace. "That one has one thousand rooms. No Ranas there now."

Only a month before, Nepal had had a nearly bloodless revolution, and Nehru's protégés forced the 400 male Rana aristocrats to give up the absolute control over the country. The new "democratic" Government of Nepal had not yet had time to build Nepal's first hotel. Our driver took us to an adobe bungalow with a new sign reading "Government Guest House." A servant took our luggage and led us into the dining room where lunch was being served to Robert Sanford, an American technical assistant we had last seen descending an Afghan coal mine. At that time Sanford—a skinny beanpole usually dressed in long underwear and working clothes—was a much admired man because he was the only person in all Afghanistan with enough nerve to climb into that coal mine, which happened to be on fire.

"Well I can't put out a mine fire unless I see what it is like," said Sanford, climbing into the smoky depths. This remark was quoted and requoted in Central Asia as a "typical Americanism." Sanford did succeed in putting out that mine fire, and six others, in Afghanistan.

"Now my new title is 'United States Technical Assistant Assigned to Nepal,'" Sanford told us. "I just finished crawling through a crooked old copper mine that was unexplored for centuries. I had to unwind a ball of string as I went along, so that I could find my way out of it. No Nepalese would go down into that mine with me—it was supposed to be haunted by a dragon or something."

We had arrived in Khatmandu just in time, according to Sanford. "The last Rana ruler is about to leave for a nice, quiet life of exile. Take my car and go over to see him. But don't try to shake hands with the old boy; he's not supposed

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to touch heathens like you with no caste at all. He's a maharajah."

The palace of the last Rana Maharajah was a white plaster wedding cake. A uniformed guard led us up a wide flight of white marble stairs to a mirrored reception hall. Crystal chandeliers, twenty feet long, dripped from the ceiling and the floor was black-and-white marble mosaic. Life-size portraits of the previous maharajahs stared down at us, each of them wearing a fantastic crown of cabochon emeralds, bird-of-paradise plumes, and pearls as big as onions.

The deposed Maharajah Mohan Shamshere Jung Bahadur Rana, stooped with his sixty-seven years, entered the reception room wearing a gray worsted business suit and a plain black velvet pillbox on his head.

"Sit down, sit down," he whispered, not offering his hand. We sat down on a blue silk Louis XV love seat. A servant in starched white linen passed us crystal goblets of canned orange juice. The Maharajah did not drink with us, because of our lack of caste, but he said he would be glad to answer our questions.

"How are you going to spend your—uh—retirement?" asked Weller.

"My first task will be getting a comfortable truss to support my hernia," replied the Maharajah. "I've never had a truss that fitted me properly. I think I can get a good one in Bombay, though."

"You are welcome in India?"

The last Rana Maharajah allowed himself a stony smile. "Oh, yes indeed. We Ranas came from India about five hundred years ago. We Ranas are still pure-blooded Indians. We never intermingled with the mountain people of Nepal."

We looked through his thick spectacles and noted his large, round eyes. So far all the Nepalese we had seen were squat and slant-eyed, looking far more mongoloid than Indian. Obviously the Maharajah was racially different from the men he ruled. His hands, lying quietly in his lap, were

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thin and long, mottled from generations of aristocratic inbreeding.

"The things you have heard about the Ranas are false," continued the Maharajah. "We Ranas kept an orderly, independent Government here in Nepal. But now Nepal will not have her independence long. Nehru has appointed the Indians who hold the posts of chief counselor to the cabinet, finance minister, and director of police intelligence here."

Weller and I recalled what we had heard about the Ranas. They never gave an accounting of how they spent Nepal's revenues. Besides their palaces, they were supposed to have three hundred million dollars safely invested in Switzerland. The Maharajah was whispering again.

"I could have fought and held my power. The Gurkhas were loyal to me. But who would have profited from bloodshed here? Only the Chinese Communists—over there in Tibet. So now Nepal is supposed to have a democratic Government." The Maharajah emitted a hoarse cackle. "Democratic Government," he sneered. "You will see how long that lasts here. A year at the most." He stood up and led us to the flight of marble stairs. "Good-bye, I am sorry you did not see Nepal in the time of her greatness, during the time of the Ranas."

As we went out, a member of the palace guard informed us the stairs were made of purest Carrara, imported from Italy before Nepal was linked to the rest of the world by road or airline. The marble, he added proudly, had been hauled over the mountains on the strong backs of Gurkhas.

We returned to the guest house to find Sanford talking to a tan, round-eyed little man wearing a tweed suit and a Nepalese nightcap. "Meet my friend Mr. Rana," said Sanford.

The plump face of Mr. Rana lit up with humor. "I am a democratic Rana," he said. "Minister of Planning for the new Government. Politically I did not agree with the Maharajah Rana you just met."

Sanford, with his face of caverns and cliffs, looked fondly at Mr. Rana. The little Nepalese, half his height, soft and

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chubby, with beautifully manicured nails, beamed back at Sanford. Evidently the two men were good friends, though they were as different as two men could be.

Sanford threw another log on the fire and told us Mr. Rana was the only member of the Government in Khatmandu at the moment: "Because the rest of the officials are away, helping King Tribubana show himself to the people."

We said we didn't quite understand.

"You explain to them, Mr. Rana," said Sanford with a smile.

"Our King Tribubana is a reincarnation of the god Vishnu," began Mr. Rana. "When Maharajah Rana ruled here the people never saw their king. But now that King Tribubana has been set up as head of the country again he is making a royal tour. The new Government is helping him."

"If the Nepalese see their new Government officials standing next to the reincarnation of Vishnu, they know the new Government is all right. Isn't that it, Mr. Rana?" asked Sanford.

"That is correct," replied the Nepalese. A servant announced that dinner was ready. Mr. Rana rose, said he had an appointment, and hurried out.

"Mr. Rana is a Brahmin," sighed Sanford. "That's why he can't eat with me. But he comes over here every evening for a talk. He really is a very intelligent guy, but the caste system is no joke in this country."

Weller mentioned that we had passed many Buddhist shrines on the way into Khatmandu from the airfield. Buddhists do not have a caste system.

"Sure, Buddha was born here," Sanford said. "But Buddhism is a dead religion here, now. When the Ranas came here from India, they imposed their Hinduism and the caste system to help them rule. Now this country is just about the most Hindu place on earth. Do you know that when Nepal signed a treaty with the U. S. A. a year ago, the American

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diplomats had to sign on a day and at an hour specified by Hindu priests as propitious? Well, they did."

We ate chicken stew and custard in the freezing dining room, with Sanford telling us more amazing things about Nepal. "Mr. Rana is really Major General Mahabir Shamshere Rana. All pure-blooded Ranas become major generals on their fourteenth birthday."

There were five Major General Ranas working for Nepal's new democratic Government and Sanford thought there would soon be more. "Don't think the Ranas are all washed up. They are educated people and the new Government has to use them. There's a Major General Rana as Nepalese Ambassador to Washington right now." There were also Class B and Class C Ranas in Nepal, those who had intermarried with the mountain people and lowered their caste, but we decided to forget about them. We held onto the thought that all Class A Ranas were Major Generals, and King Tribhuvan, though the reincarnation of Vishnu, was not a Brahmin.

A cold December gale swirled through the cracks of our adobe bungalow and blew out the fires and kerosene lamps. It was eight o'clock in the evening, but Sanford assured us there was nothing to do but go to bed. "The new Government hasn't had time to install electricity or central heating in Khatmandu."

As a good-night thought, Sanford mentioned that Nepal would in the future go far; it had cobalt of great strategic value, copper, and oil seepages near the Tibetan border.

Weller, with elaborate casualness, asked if Nepal had uranium, by any chance.

"I don't know yet," Sanford replied, unblinking.

The next morning we piled into Sanford's car for a tour of the Khatmandu Valley and its golden cities, Bhatgaon and Patan. Each had a central temple area filled with life-sized Buddhas, protected by cobra hoods of gold. The central

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squares were outlined by pagodas with narrowing tiers and pinnacles, glinting in the sun. But tucked amidst the art of Nepal's Buddhist days were dozens of tiny statues of the Hindu monkey god and the elephant god, smoking with new incense, wreathed with flowers, and bloody with fresh chicken sacrifice.

Sanford led us to a wooden pagoda carved with Hindu gods, animals, and men. "Look at the carvings under the first tier," he said, pointing upward. We squinted to make out the figures amidst the peeling scarlet paint. Nepalese crowded around us, giggling, and pointing to the frieze. Finally we saw that the men and women were portrayed in a hundred different attitudes of sexual embrace. They looked like acrobats, doing backbends and executing the most intricate contortions. The frieze was outlined by phallic symbols and the corners of the pagoda consisted of grinning gods holding their penes erect.

"Mr. Rana told me the art of lovemaking was cultivated to a very high degree in Nepal about 200 years ago," said Sanford as we moved away, embarrassed by the mob of Nepalese who had gathered to watch our faces as we examined their erotic art. I remembered my Buddhist friends in South-east Asia, and their renunciation of worldly pleasures, and I wondered if they knew what had supplanted the message of Buddha in his native land.

We climbed back into Sanford's car and drove through the Valley, scattered with the palaces and tanks of Nepal's Hindu kings. In any other land, the palaces would inspire awe, but in Nepal everything is dwarfed by the icy Himalayas on the horizon. Suddenly a jeep whizzed by us, carrying a dozen dusky youngsters singing "Clementine" at the top of their lungs.

"There go Father Moran and his kids," said Sanford. "He's a Jesuit from Erie, Pa., who has opened a new school here." We ordered our driver to follow the jeep. Father Marshall Moran's school was a former Rana palace with a view of

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Mount Everest from its upper campus. The priest was a tall athlete with a crew haircut, who was teaching his students baseball when we arrived. The 6,500 pounds of desks, chairs, and books for his new Godivari School had been flown over the Himalayas only a few weeks before. We were invited into the former Rana palace, where crucifixes hung on the walls. A Rana boy was bowing before a crucifix, lifting his folded hands in the Hindu greeting.

"Sure, our kids know about Jesus now," said Father Moran. "He was a great man who died for all people, regardless of their religion. We're not allowed to do any Christianizing here. But there's no ban on teaching morals and love for fellow men, regardless of caste."

Father Moran was enthusiastic about the way caste distinctions were breaking down in Godivari School. He led us to the mess hall so that we could see the round-eyed junior Ranas eating their supper with the slant-eyed sons of Gurkhas. "Brahmins have to sweep out the halls and pound erasers just like the other kids," the Jesuit asserted. We were informed the students of Godivari School were very fond of Tom Swift and the Rover Boys, but they were learning geography and arithmetic, too. The priest invited us to sit down in the mess hall and have some cocoa and cookies. The children dribbled their food all over the table because they never took their eyes off us for a second.

Weller asked Father Moran how he happened to be chosen to run Nepal's first school.

"I'm a friend of Nehru's," he replied, in a very matter-of-fact tone, frowning at a young Rana boy who was being especially messy.

Weller asked the Jesuit if he would mind telling us how he got to be a friend of India's Prime Minister.

"Well, when I was a missionary down in India, in Bihar, Nehru came one day to try to stop the Muslims and Hindus killing each other. Nehru was determined to talk to the people for miles around. No one else wanted to risk his neck ex-

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posing himself to the mob, so I went up to Nehru and said I would drive him in my jeep. Together we toured all the afflicted areas. Nehru made all the speeches, of course; I was just the chauffeur. He got the people to calm down, and in some places the killing even stopped. After that Nehru liked me because I had guts enough to drive him around. I admired him for his courage, too. Nehru must have told the new Nepalese Government I would be a good teacher for a country that is 99 per cent illiterate. So I was invited to come up and try it. Nepal never had a school before; the sons of the Ranas had private tutors. But we're doing fine, just fine." A bell rang and the students filed out of the messhall, round-eyed boys and slant-eyed boys with their arms around each other.

Back at Khatmandu's guest house, Mr. Rana was waiting for his usual evening talk with Sanford. He wanted to discuss Nepal's most famous natural resource, "the abominable snow man."

"I think the abominable snow man exists," said Mr. Rana, and waited for the arguments.

"No scientist has ever seen one," said Weller. "High altitudes excite fantasy."

"Anthropologists have ruled the abominable snow man is either a bear or a langur monkey," said Sanford. "After all, Mr. Rana, anthropologists have studied photographs of the snow man's prints." Sanford turned to us. "Two different British expeditions on Mount Everest took photographs of what the sherpa guides said were snow-man prints."

"I talked to a sherpa who definitely saw a snow man," insisted Mr. Rana. "The snow man suddenly appeared on a trail—above 22,000 feet. He had a human face and a furry body, mottled brown and white. When the sherpa saw him he was standing upright, but then he leaped across a chasm on all fours and disappeared in the snow on the other side."

"Well, I'm not about to call that sherpa a liar," said Sanford. "Remember the Yukón snow worm." He threw another



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log on the fire and laughed at our expectant faces. "In the old days, when I was a miner in Alaska, every tenderfoot had to drink raw whiskey with a Yukon snow worm swimming in it. Of course the snow worm was just a piece of spaghetti with its head tinted with catsup. But then what happened? Zoologists actually found worms living in snow. After that no tenderfoot knew whether he was gulping down a real snow worm or a spaghetti worm."

Mr. Rana observed that snow worms and abominable snow men were not in the same class at all. "The abominable snow man is called abominable because that's what he is. The Everest guides are afraid of him because if they see an abominable snow man they soon lose their footing and fall. They never see one again. Why? Because they are dead."

Sanford said he heard a Buddhist monastery some place had the scalp of a snow man. Anthropologists wanted to study it, but the Buddhist monks refused to hand it over because that would bring abominable luck.

A servant announced dinner and again Mr. Rana hastily left. Sanford assured us that Mr. Rana had a very scientific mind. "He was only sticking up for snow men because he wants you to write about them. He thinks snow men will help Nepal get tourists."

As we ate our usual chicken stew and sweet custard, the wind howled down the Valley and blew out our fires and lamps again. We stepped outside to see Everest's snowy sentinels, touched by moonlight, looking ghostly and unreal.

"What a tourist country this will make," murmured Sanford. "Once the Government builds a hotel and people find out where Nepal is." We went to bed, the only place we could keep our fingers and toes from freezing.

The next day we were informed the new Government was still out of town, helping to show King Tribubana to his people. The King was now somewhere near the Indian border, where he was reported traveling on a royal elephant. "No use trying to catch up with him," said Sanford. "The King

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also has a royal plane which he uses for long-distance journeys."

Sanford told us that if correspondents wrote plain English, Americans would be a lot less confused as to what was going on in the Himalayas. He wanted to know why we didn't report, straight out, without beating around the bush, how King Tribubana got to be a real king again. We asked Sanford to tell us how he would write the story.

"The Indian Ambassador here in Nepal was a pretty smart guy. He knew Nepal couldn't be ruled by the Ranas much longer, as a Shangri-La for a few hundred gents. As long as Nepal had to open up anyway, he wanted it to be friendly to India. An Indian dependency, in fact. So this Indian Ambassador went to King Tribubana and told him Nehru would put him back on his throne—just leave everything to Nehru. Then what happens? The Maharajah Rana gets wind of the plan. King Tribubana suddenly takes refuge in the Indian Embassy with about half a dozen of his prettiest wives. An Indian plane lands here and flies off with Tribubana and his harem and lands them in Delhi.

"So far things don't look so good. King Tribubana is the reincarnation of Vishnu, don't forget, so the Nepalese don't like having him out of the country—bad luck or something. So then Nehru's Nepalese friends down in India—the guys the Ranas threw out of the country—start up a revolution. The Indian Army helps the revolutionaries here and there. Sure enough, the Maharajah has to abdicate. King Tribubana flies back to Nepal on an Indian plane, very triumphant and all that."

Weller observed that Nehru was supposed to be the world's greatest anti-imperialist and this intervention in Nepal's affairs didn't seem very idealistic.

"When it comes to his own borders, Nehru is a practical man," responded Sanford. "Either India gets Nepal or Communist China does. Take your pick."

"But the U. S. Government has signed a treaty with Nepal

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recognizing its independence. Where does that fit in?" asked Weller.

"It doesn't," answered Sanford. "The U. S. Government wants to put an American Embassy into Khatmandu. We can't do it. Why not? Because Nehru is afraid that if we have an Embassy here the Chinese Communists will demand one, too."

Sanford didn't want to talk any more politics with us because, he said: "I'm a miner who sticks to mining. That's the only reason I'm allowed to work in Nepal." He advised us to go around to the China Lama: "An interesting guy who will start you thinking." He pointed to a gilded tower with enormous eyes painted on it. "The China Lama lives over there. Just walk in—it's a deserted Buddhist temple."

The black Oriental eyes painted on the four sides of the temple's tower dominated all Khatmandu. The eyes seemed to be staring down at everybody, even at the Gurkhas drilling on the grassy *maidan* in the town's central square. As we walked up to the tower, we noticed that it was enclosed by a high, whitewashed wall. The gate was open and we stepped into a courtyard lined with Buddhist prayer wheels. We were examining a prayer wheel, a sort of Buddhist rosary, trying to figure out how the devout sent prayers up to heaven just by spinning them. When we heard the slip-slap of sandals. We turned around and confronted a grinning Chinese wearing a tan poplin ski jacket and old army trousers.

"I China Lama," he said affably. "You come to see how Buddhist religion works?" The China Lama told us he had been born in China, as the reincarnation of a Buddhist saint and that was why he had been sent to take care of this temple, Boddhnath, which was very holy. He led us to a plaster mound, very clean, freshly whitewashed. "Buddha bones are in there. No, you can't see. Buddha bones in the center of this *stupa*. But come with me, you can see Buddhist angels."

He led us to a small room cut out of the courtyard's thick walls. He picked up a candle of yak butter at the doorway

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and lit it. Then we noticed the central figure in the room, a twenty-foot statue of Buddha, covered with peeling gold paint. The China Lama flicked the candle around the room, pointing out figurines of many-armed men in metal and wood, lining the walls. "These are the Buddhist angels who are proteeting Buddha," he said. In a corner was a stack of drums, cymbals, and horns. "We use these for Buddhist ceremonies," said the Lama. "Look, this horn made of holy saint's thighbone." He blew a low, eerie note, and set the human bone down again. "Not time for Buddhist ceremony now. Come out." He led us out and shut the door.

Years before I would have been revolted by such a manifestation of religion. But after seeing Calvary, Boddhnath's relics and statues did not seem unnatural. Everywhere the gentle, moral philosophies of Christs and Buddhas did not seem enough to satisfy the lesser men who came after them. People seemed to need temples and symbolic ceremonies to help them pray.

"And those eyes, painted on the tower," asked Weller, "what are they for?"

"Those eyes watch all the time. See that you good," replied the Lama.

That reminded Weller of big brother Mao Tse-tung. "Does China tell you how to run Boddhnath?" asked Weller.

The Lama's yellow parchment face screwed up into a mass of laughing wrinkles. His tiny eyes disappeared in the creases between cheekbones and eyebrows. He shook with silent laughter.

"What is the joke?" asked Weller politely.

"I have no message from China side for many, many months. I think New China forgot about Boddhnath." Weller said he was sure it hadn't, and asked the Lama what he would do if New China sent a new lama to care for Boddhnath.

The Lama's face instantly sobered. "New China cannot do that. Reincarnation of special Buddhist saint must be here.

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Not reincarnation of *any* Buddhist saint." Then the China Lama began to laugh again. We had no idea if this was Chinese guile or the Lama's way of expressing consternation. We moved toward the gate.

"I think I go to Lhasa soon and ask Buddhists and Chinese there what I should do. This temple is very poor because Nepalese people don't come here any more," said the Lama. Weller drew some money from his pocket, but the Lama refused it. "No, only Buddhist peoples must pay for this temple. Lhasa is like Vatican for Catholics. Lhasa will know what to do about Boddhnath."

I asked how the Lama happened to know about Catholics.

"I send my daughter to Catholic convent school in India," he replied. "Catholics have good religion, too. My daughter, she want to be a *chomo*, a Buddhist nun, and do good works all her life. My daughter learning how to be good *chomo* from Catholic nuns." The Lama added that Buddhists had *chomos* before Catholics had nuns. "Buddhist religion and Catholic religion, I think much alike," he said. "Buddha was prince like Christ, also born in manger by virgin mother while mother fleeing from bad mans who want to kill her child. Only Buddha born 600 years before Christ. Maybe Christ reincarnation Buddha, I think." The Lama laughed with silent merriment again. "All about Buddha's birth written in our scriptures. We have very old scriptures, too—older than yours."

As we went out the gate, a group of Nepalese peasants, carrying loads of firewood on their backs, passed Boddhnath. They glanced up at the eyes painted on the gilded tower and made obeisance. The China Lama watched them with an expressionless face, his hands in the pockets of his army trousers. He waved good-bye, then called us back.

"Go see Buddhist temple of Swayambhunath, over there. Big garden, many stairs. Nepalese people go there because it has thousands, thousands, thousands of monkeys now. Monkeys do funny things, like Hindu monkey god, so Nepalese

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people like Swayambhunath better than here. This is old type holy place—no funny things here.”

We walked back to the guest house, hoping the similarities in religions would some day cause men to stop fighting over the differences.

Mr. Rana was sitting with Sanford again that evening. We asked him what he thought of the China Lama. Mr. Rana seemed as bewildered as we. “I think he is a religious man,” he said. “But I do not think he should be allowed to go to Lhasa, inasmuch as the Chinese Communists are there now.”

Sanford stretched and asked Mr. Rana to repeat what he had been saying before we came in.

“I was pointing out that I am worried about the new Communist influence in Nepal,” said Mr. Rana. “Nepalese Communists want to ally Nepal with Tibet.”

“Not with India?”

“No. Tibet is now a Communist country, but India is not. Besides, Nepal’s six million people are racially more akin to Tibetans than to Indians.”

Mr. Rana warmed his hands by the fire a moment, as if thinking out his next words. Then he turned to Weller. “You must keep informed about a certain Nepalese named Doctor Singh. He is not really a doctor but he was trained as a medical corpsman in the Indian Army, so he calls himself ‘doctor.’ He is a very dangerous man for you Americans.”

“Why?”

“Doctor Singh is a Communist. Of that there is no doubt. He has a guerrilla army here in Nepal, near the Tibetan border. He makes hit-and-run raids all the time and then skips back to Tibet and his friends, the Chinese Communists.”

Six weeks later Doctor Singh captured Khatmandu and held it for twenty-four hours. The Gurkhas drove him out and he fled to Tibet. Some Nepalese officials are convinced that he went to Peking for some solid indoctrination on how to capture towns and hold onto them. In 1853 the Commu-

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nists in Nepal were so troublesome that the Nepalese Government had to ask Indian troops to help restore order.

Weller thought the borders of Tibet might soon see many Doctor Singhs. It was clear the Communists were infiltrating all along India's 2,000-mile Himalayan border. However, there was no way to travel along the border except by mule or horseback and that was not practical for a reporter who was expected to send a story at least four times a week. Weller and I could visit only those border towns that were accessible by plane or car. We flew from Nepal to Calcutta, changed planes, and landed near the Himalayan resort town of Darjeeling. From there we hired a car to take us over the fifty miles of dirt road to Sikkim, an Indian protectorate looking out on the ramparts of Tibet.

A company of Indian troops guarded the India-Sikkim border. We were handed mimeographed forms to sign, reading "I promise on my honor not to try to enter Tibet." We signed and asked why this boy-scout oath was necessary.

"Because of Miss Christobel Bevan," replied a lieutenant. "Miss Bevan is an English lady, about fifty years old, who was here a while ago. She said she had an appointment with an *avatar*—a Buddhist angel—in the holy city of Shigatze, in Tibet." The Indian Army prides itself on being secular and does not pay much attention to angels, Buddhist or Hindu. The lieutenant impressed upon Miss Bevan that Tibet and all its holy cities were occupied by Chinese Communist troops and, besides, Shigatze lay more than a two-week pony journey away, over the 14,000-foot Nalu-La Pass.

Miss Bevan was not seen for many weeks and everyone assumed she had gone back to England. Then one evening the border guards spotted her riding a mule, coming down the trail leading from Tibet.

"I told you that I was going to a spiritual meeting in Shigatze," she said. "My *avatar* told me to come. My mission is accomplished. Now I will go back to England." Miss Bevan stoutly refused to say anything about what she had seen in

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Tibet and whether or not she had met any Chinese Communists along with her *avatar*. "I am interested only in spiritual things," she insisted. The Indian Army, after studying the regulations concerning border violators, had fined Miss Bevan two dollars and fifty cents.

"But the fine would be much heavier for you, Mr. Weller," warned the lieutenant, "because you and your wife have just signed a pledge that you will not cross to Tibet."

After we had assured the lieutenant we had no spiritual appointments whatever, he waved us on to Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim.

Gangtok was crowded with Tibetan traders with long caravans of yaks, carrying raw wool and the hairy musk glands of oxen. An Indian trader, wearing a tweed suit and turban, was squatting on the ground, surrounded by Tibetans wearing turquoise earrings, rags around their feet, and filthy blankets fastened to their bodies with pieces of rope. The eyes of the Tibetans were thin slits and I wondered how they could be distinguished from Chinese.

At one point during the bargaining with the Indian, a Tibetan fumbled inside his robe and drew out a heavy silver Chinese coin. The Indian trader weighed the silver in the palm of his hand and smiled. He turned to us and held up the coin. "This is why the Chinese Communists are tolerated in Tibet," he said. "The Chinese pay the Tibetans in silver for everything they use—houses, firewood, and food." The Tibetans brought out some more of the silver coins and the trader ordered sacks of rice, cotton cloth, tins of tobacco, and chocolate loaded onto their yaks.

"Somebody in Lhasa is buying a lot of tobacco and chocolate and sugar these days," the trader told us. "Probably the Chinese Army. There are more Tibetans coming over the Natu-La to trade now than I have seen in twenty years." The Indian didn't want to buy any of the things the Tibetans had to sell. He explained that raw wool of poor quality was a glut



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on the market and the manufacturers of perfume didn't use much musk any more; chemicals did the job just as well.

We paid a call on the Indian political officer in Gangtok, a handsome Oxford graduate who was willing to talk to us about Tibet, providing he remained an anonymous "well-informed source." His wife was extraordinarily beautiful, with a pale, delicate face. She was wearing a curious robe of green brocade, lined with pink silk and tied with a scarlet satin sash. She caught my look of admiration.

"Lovely, isn't it? This is the sort of dress Tibetan noblewomen wear. I use it here because it is so much warmer than an Indian sari." Judging by their light skins, refined features, and educations, our hosts were Brahmins, but they were eager to waive the difference in rank and invited us to lunch with them. The gossip in Gangtok that day was that Mao Tse-tung had sent the sixteen-year-old Dalai Lama two large altar lamps of solid gold, a priceless lama robe of Chinese tribute silk, and a very large painting of Mao Tse-tung.

We remembered that the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth reincarnations of the "Living Buddha" had been poisoned by previous Chinese invaders, and we wondered how long the present Dalai Lama, the fourteenth reincarnation, would be allowed to live his present worldly cycle.

"My guess is that the Dalai Lama will stay on in Lhasa, alive," said our well-informed source. "But his rival, the Panchen Lama, will grow in power. The Panchen Lama is being installed in Shigatse monastery right now."

The Panchen Lama, a fifteen-year-old boy, was born in China and was brought into Tibet with an armed escort of a thousand Chinese soldiers. When the procession reached Lhasa, the Dalai Lama was forced to recognize the Panchen Lama as another true reincarnation of Buddha. The Tibetans had to take the Chinese Communist word for it that the new Panchen Lama had passed the necessary tests proving he was the reincarnation of the previous Panchen Lama who

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had died in China in 1838 as an exile from Tibet. Traditionally, the Panchen Lama was supposed to be concerned only with spiritual affairs, while the Dalai Lama was the temporal as well as spiritual head of Tibet. "But now everyone expects the Chinese Communists will see to it that their protégé, the Panchen Lama, will get more and more temporal," commented our host.

The Indian political officer admitted he was rather worried about the new roads the Chinese were building in Tibet, running parallel to the frontiers of India. The Chinese also were building a road connecting Tibet with their province of Sinkiang, and we indulged in a little speculation as to whether Sinkiang's new atomic city of Ta-tung-ho needed more uranium, found in Tibet. But our host didn't care to talk about "rumors" like uranium in Tibet.

He agreed that it was not a rumor that many of the Communist infiltrators who were crossing the border from Tibet were lamas or monks. "But then, at least a third of all the males in Tibet are either lamas or monks. I suppose it is natural that they, having educations, should be used for political penetration here." Sikkim, he added, had thirty-seven Buddhist lamaseries, though a total population of only 150,000.

Our host managed the external affairs for the Maharajah of Sikkim, and another polished Oxford graduate from India managed His Highness' internal affairs for him. Both of India's "representatives" in Sikkim were busy working out land-reform programs, modern tax systems, and public improvements for the Maharajah. India was sending her best administrators and diplomats to outposts on the Tibetan border. We discovered that the higher we went in the Himalayas the more rarefied the intellectual atmosphere of Indian homes.

After a superb lunch of roast pheasant, herb salad, and honey-almond sweet, our host led us to the road and pointed to the palace of the Maharajah of Sikkim.

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"He lives over there, on that hill where you see the red Tibetan gate, the black yaks' tails, and the tissue-paper prayers. Yes, quite so—the things flying from the tops of bamboo poles *are* prayers. It is considered an easy way to get word to heaven, not terribly far above us. Why black yaks' tails? Well, I believe the yak is regarded like the cow in India. Its tail must have some sort of significance. Mmmmm, I'll check that."

We headed for the yaks' tails and tissue-paper prayers, to leave a message asking the Maharajah of Sikkim for an interview. The guards standing at the fancy red gate made it clear that the Maharajah was very busy. His daughter, the Princess of Sikkim, had a new baby, and its father was a Tibetan noble.

In Gangtok's marketplace one morning I spied a young man, about eighteen, wearing a brilliant yellow turtle-neck sweater and gray flannels. He was an Oriental, but his brownish hair had a wave coaxed into it. I suddenly realized he looked rather like me. We stood in the street and surveyed each other, like two children.

"You American?" he asked finally.

"Yes, what are you?"

"Sikkimese. At first I thought you were Sikkimese, too, but when you crossed the street, I knew you were an American."

"How could you tell?"

The young man laughed, very pleased with his knowledge. "Americans always look up and down the street before they cross because there are so many automobiles in the U. S. A. that they get killed if they don't." He knew all about Americans, he said, because he had been educated in a British school in India and once had an American roommate. He introduced himself as "Tash" and we shook hands.

"I'm a trader," Tash said. "I'm rounding up fast ponies for another trip to Lhasa."

I said I wished I could go to Lhasa.

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"I'll take you with me," Tash said. "Providing you won't talk when the Chinese are around. There's a lot of anti-American propaganda up there in Tibet now."

I asked him to tell me more about that. We moved over to a spot in the warming sun, overlooking one of Sikkim's lama-series.

"In Tibet all the towns are hung with banners saying American imperialists are killing innocent Koreans and there are lots of pictures of battles in Korea. The new Tibetan officials brought in by the Chinese are always making speeches saying Americans are terrible people. But I don't believe that."

"When you are in Tibet do you see many Chinese Communist soldiers?" I asked.

Tash kicked at some stones. "Sure. Everywhere. The Chinese are even poking around in the monasteries of the fighting lamas who have arms caches. But they leave the praying monasteries alone."

Tash said he always gave Chinese soldiers a wide berth: "But I see them building barracks and fortifications all around the borders and setting up a radio network. The Tibetans never heard radios before, but now they hear them all the time."

"Do Tibetans ever fight the Chinese Communists?"

"A couple of times the Tibetans threw stones at them. The Chinese threw back hand grenades, so the Tibetans stopped." Tash added that the new Tibetan officials, who had been educated in Chinese universities, were busy making new laws: "Like the Indians here. Sure, the Indians give Sikkim money every year but they tell us what to do, too. More than the British ever did." Tash shrugged. "We Sikkimese aren't independent any more, and the Tibetans aren't independent any more, but that's the way the world is now."

I told Tash that my husband and I were reporters and we would like to meet the Maharajah of Sikkim, just to talk things over.

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"The Maharajah wouldn't want to talk to Americans," replied Tash, very firmly.

"Why not?"

"He is related to Tibetans. The Maharajah's family came from Tibet about 300 years ago and all the Sikkimese nobles still go to Tibet to get married. So we're all half-Tibetans, you see." Tash stood up, embarrassed. He hadn't meant to give away that he was a Sikkimese noble. He hurried off to look for ponies again, for his next trip to Lhasa.

When the sun went down, Gangtok turned freezing cold. Weller and I bundled ourselves into our coats and spent the night huddled on the blanketless bed in a heatless room of the Sikkim guest house for foreigners. It was decided that even if I did look like a Sikkimese, a trip to Lhasa would be foolhardy. One of the Chinese generals who organized the Chinese Communist conquest of Tibet in the autumn of 1950 was General Chow Pao-chung, the same pockmarked general who held Weller and me in his protective custody in Manchuria for three weeks. I fell asleep thinking of Chow and the odd way he had of popping back into my life. A lot of intelligence officers were getting interested in Chow Pao-chung these days. They had learned he was a Colonel in the Russian Army as well as a General of New China.

Some quiet places in this world suddenly draw people from many lands—pilgrims, princes, refugees, tourists, professors, retired officials, soldiers, and writers. Kalimpong, thirty miles south of Gangtok, is one of these Canterburys of our day, and we wanted to see it.

Our hired car crawled for hours behind swaying ox-carts full of Tibetan raw wool, bound for Kalimpong market. The road was so narrow we could not pass. Suddenly there was a fearful rumble. Rocks and uprooted saplings came tumbling down the mountainside on our left, bounced across the road, and fell into the deep ravine at our right. "Landslide!" yelled our driver. We scrambled out of the car and crouched behind

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large boulders. The flying rocks ricocheted off the boulders and missed our heads by inches. The oxen stampeded and smashed into neighboring carts, but they did not lose their footing and fall off the trail. The landslide subsided within a few minutes, leaving the road blocked by rubble, sacks of wool, tangled carts, and enraged oxen. The wool traders screamed at each other, and miraculously had the road cleared within half an hour.

"That was only a warning landslide," said our driver. "Hurry. Now's our chance to pass the ox-carts. We've got to get past here before a big landslide comes." We followed the driver back into the car, skinned past the oxen, and continued on our way. We had two more small "warning landslides," and had to shovel the rocks off the road, before we made Kalimpong that evening.

When the British gave up control of India, many of the older *pukka sahibs*, who couldn't imagine themselves living in austere, socialist England, built stone chalets in Kalimpong. The town, cool but sunny, is built on green foothills, surrounded by tea plantations and breath-taking views of the sparkling Himalayas. The servants are good, patient little men and women with placid Oriental faces.

For years Kalimpong was a genteel retreat, a market for Tibet's raw wool, and a boarding-school town. Then some strange people started coming over the 14,350 foot Jelep-La Pass. Min Wang, who said he was Prince of the Amuk Banner of the Buryat Mongols, asked for a room in Kalimpong. The Chinese Communists had moved into his homeland. He, and hundreds of his followers, fled south, over Tibet, and asked for refuge in Kalimpong. They were joined by Kazakh stragglers, then by Chinese professors who had lost their academic freedom.

When the Communists were approaching Lhasa, even the Dalai Lama's holy mother fled to Kalimpong and lived in a rented villa. An Austrian mountain climber, Heinrich Harrer,

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who had escaped British prison camps in wartime India and spent seven years in Tibet, came tumbling over the Pass, too. Then came wealthy Tibetan merchants and lamas carrying treasures—Buddhist scriptures, historical documents, holy objects of gold, magnificent robes—from the Vatican of Buddhism. There was a new saying: "To walk two blocks in Kalimpong is to walk a thousand miles in Asia."

Nehru made Kalimpong even more interesting when he told India's Parliament: "Kalimpong is a nest of international spies of every country. Sometimes I begin to doubt if the greater part of Kalimpong's population is not foreign spies."

We checked in at MacDonald's Himalayan Hotel, a rambling wooden structure that looks like an inexpensive summer camp in the Catskills. The evening we arrived, the half-Tibetan son of the first MacDonald was sitting on the porch, gossiping with two red-robed lamas. MacDonald's old Tibetan face was sparkling with merriment over something the lamas were telling him. His daughters were in the cozy lounge, clicking their knitting needles and discussing the disastrous marriages of their neighbors. They had faces far less Oriental than their father's and they spoke precise, ladies'-boarding-school English. The youngest MacDonald was an eighteen-year-old girl with nothing Oriental about her. In three generations, the Tibetan blood in the MacDonald clan had completely disappeared.

The youngest MacDonald sat next to her new fiancé, a blond Austrian Baron who was a Tibetologist. They held hands and stole kisses whenever the middle-generation MacDonalds were looking the other way.

At dinner that night the entire MacDonald family of Kalimpong, numbering about a dozen people, sat around a long table in the dining room and passed mashed potatoes and lamb chops to each other. They were saying that perhaps the Austrian Baron knew his bride-to-be in some earlier life.

"Very possibly," replied the Baron. "I first thought of com-

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ing to Kalimpong in a dream, when I was a fourteen-year-old boy in Austria. I had seen a picture of Mount Kanchenjunga and I decided to climb it."

At this remark, the eldest MacDonald, looking like a benign Buddha at the head of the table, beamed with satisfaction. It was plain that as far as he was concerned, his grandchild was going to marry an old flame of several centuries before.

"No doubt your previous romance ended in tragedy and you two were reborn to meet in Kalimpong and consummate your love," said a romantic middle-generation MacDonald. The tone was bantering, but it was followed by a reflective little silence. Then the whole family clamored to hear more about the Baron's dream, in Austria, at the significant age of fourteen.

After the last five months in India, Weller and I no longer smiled when people discussed reincarnation. By now it seemed no more peculiar than talk of heaven or hell. The basic idea was the same—the comforting thought that in another life the good of this world are rewarded and the wicked punished.

Every evening after dinner a collection of Kalimpong's "spies" gathered in the living room of MacDonald's Hotel and warmed their stocking-feet over charcoal braziers. Most of them were refugees from New China, but all were obsessed with Tibet, either politically or spiritually. They could talk of nothing else. Someone wondered how the Dalai Lama's mother was doing. She was an old lady of regal bearing called "The Great Victorious Mother" who had decided, a few weeks before, to rejoin her son in Lhasa and share his fate, whatever it was. The guests at MacDonald's told us how she went back over the Jelep-La Pass, with a splendid caravan of mules.

Kalimpong did not quite approve of the Dalai Lama's elder brother, the Taktel Rimpoche, a reincarnated Buddhist angel who now was living his cycle on a small farm in Virginia,



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U. S. A. The Chinese Communists asked the Taktsel Rimpoche to persuade his brother, the Living Buddha, not to leave Tibet. But the Taktsel Rimpoche insisted he had rheumatism, even though he was only thirty years old. He fled to Kalimpong, and then to Calcutta, where the Chinese Communist Ambassador to India and a Chinese Communist General pleaded with him to return to Tibet. They assured him he could be treated for his rheumatism there. The Taktsel Rimpoche politely thanked the Chinese Communists for their interest in him and then quickly boarded an American plane for Washington.

Apparently American diplomats and generals also were interested in the Dalai Lama's brother. Kalimpong's gossips hoped the Taktsel Rimpoche was comfortable in his Virginia farmhouse and his rheumatism was better, but they did not think relatives of the Living Buddha ought to go to America because they couldn't keep in touch with lamaistic Buddhism there.

One of the most interesting of the refugees was Heinrich Harrer, who was writing a book about his experiences in Tibet. Harrer, a short man with an open, Alpine face and muscled, mountain-climbing legs, had a job tutoring the young Dalai Lama. He was one of the four Europeans who were working for the Tibetan Government when the Chinese Communists invaded. Harrer told us what had happened to Robert Ford, a British radio operator working for the Tibetan Government, who remained loyally at his post in eastern Tibet when the Chinese Communists arrived.

"Like any other ham radio operator, Ford had a list of amateurs all over the world, especially in the U. S., to whom he talked every night. The Communists took Ford to Peking, used his list of call letters as evidence of his imperialist spying, and threw him in jail."

Harrer was still enthralled by Tibet and his tone was full of wonder when he described the mountains he loved. "But Tibet's mountains did not protect her," Harrer added sadly.

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"In the far north, beyond the highest peaks, Tibet is a beautiful, easily rolling grassland. There's a belt of jeepable plateau running along the north, nearly a thousand miles deep. Even at 16,000 feet, it is so flat you can recognize the passes only by the changing direction of the rivers."

As a mark of special favor, the eldest MacDonald showed us his Tibetan collection and his souvenirs from his trip to Lhasa. A corner of his room was stacked with crates. He tossed out Buddhist scriptures, dozens of prayer wheels, Tibetan costumes, jewelry, swords. Finally he found what he was looking for—a scroll of fine rice paper.

"This is very rare," he said, "a letter written by the thirteenth Dalai Lama himself." We examined the beautifully brushed Chinese characters and asked what they meant. "I don't remember. My memory isn't so good any more," replied MacDonald, throwing the scroll back into the crate with a sigh. "Dalai Lamas used to be Living Buddhas, Kings of Tibet, and Grand Lamas, all in one. Now, under the Communists, the Dalai Lama will be just another lama."

MacDonald led us to his favorite lookout in Kalimpong where, on a moonlit night, only the silver peaks of the Himalayas could be seen; everything else was inky black. The air smelled of snow. MacDonald patted Weller's arm. "I am sorry you will never know what it is like up there in Tibet. It truly is another world. Or was." Weller, scarcely listening, was concentrating on pinpoints of light, far away, signaling in Morse code across a valley.

"Indian soldiers," explained the old man. "The outposts at the border are telling who is coming down the pass. I guess somebody must be crossing from Tibet tonight."

The next morning MacDonald's Hotel buzzed with talk. A new group of Tibetan pilgrims had just arrived in Kalimpong. They were bound for the ancient Buddhist shrines at Bodhi Gaya, on the plains of India. MacDonald told us to hurry to Kalimpong's police station, where we could watch the pilgrims "getting checked."

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About fifty shaggy Tibetans, their hair matted with dirt, their homespun robes in tatters, were squatting on the floor of the police station. A tall, blond European walked among them, measuring their foreheads, noses, and chins with shining new chromium tools. Weller walked up to the anthropologist.

—"Good morning. Aren't you Prince Peter?"

"I am. Hello," he replied, shaking hands. "Sit down and watch our work." We had learned in MacDonald's living room the night before that Prince Peter was the cousin of King Paul of Greece and also a cousin of the Duke of Edinburgh. He had no throne and consequently devoted himself to scientific expeditions.

Prince Peter took the face of a very dirty Tibetan in his hands and felt the bone structure. "I am trying to classify Tibetan tribes—see if their facial characteristics fall into any sort of pattern."

"Do they?"

"I don't know yet. So far Tibetans seem to be just as different as Americans." As he measured with calipers, Prince Peter called out the figures to an Indian clerk sitting at a desk piled high with graphs. Then he gave the Tibetan a pat on the back and two cigarettes. "O.K. You're finished. Next."

The next specimen was a woman whose hair was braided in thin rat-tails and whose ugly face was smeared with some sort of brownish grease. She shrieked with fear and tried to bite the royal hand.

"Calm down, baby," said Prince Peter, handing her a piece of chocolate. "God, she smells." He turned to the clerk. "Find out where this one comes from."

The clerk questioned the woman patiently, but she seemed to be deaf and watched Peter with the wary eyes of an animal. When he picked up a measuring tool, she leaped from the chair and ran out of the room. An Indian guard caught her and tried to drag her back. She screamed, bit, kicked, and clawed.

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"Let her go," said Prince Peter. "This scientific expedition can do without her." He turned to us and explained that this group of Tibetans was an exceptionally primitive lot. "Most of our customers enjoy being measured. Think it's funny. Next."

The Tibetan wore a rough blanket tied in a knot on one shoulder, leaving the other shoulder and arm completely bare. He had a face like an aborigine, a protruding jaw, button nose, and an overhanging brow that nearly obscured his slit eyes, but somehow he seemed more intelligent than the others. He answered the clerk's questions with eagerness and animation. An Indian police officer walked over and motioned this Tibetan to another room in the station.

"That chap is a Chamdo," explained Prince Peter. "Some Chamdos live inside the border of China, but speak Tibetan. When the Chinese Communists marched into Lhasa they used those Chamdos as the spearhead, to ease the way for the Chinese Regular Army which followed them in."

"Do you get many Chamdos coming through here?" asked Weller.

"No. That's why the police have taken him aside to question him."

Weller remarked that it was strange the Chinese Communists still let Tibetans make pilgrimages to India's Buddhist shrines.

"We don't expect it to last long," replied Prince Peter. "Or the trading with Tibetans either. Right now the Chinese Communists are taking it easy in Tibet. Because they are fighting in Korea, they can't afford to stir up opposition in Tibet. When the Korean war ends, the Chinese probably will crack down on the Tibetans."

Peter was especially interested in Tibetan polyandry and assured us he had measured some specimens who had as many as ten husbands, all at the same time. "Most of the traders in Tibet are women, you know, and they own all the businesses in the towns."

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"Why?"

"Because they can't be lamas or monks. They have to wait and be reborn as men before they can reach salvation. But while they are women, they sure enjoy it and handle the commercial dealings."

"I heard the Chinese Communists announced they are going to liberate the women of Tibet," Weller said. •

Prince Peter chuckled. "That's the silliest thing I've heard. Of all the women in the world, the Tibetans are the least in need of liberation. Of course, there are many lamas' daughters in Kalimpong, students in the Christian boarding schools. Maybe those are the Tibetan women the Chinese intend to liberate."

Prince Peter's wife Irene, a Parisian White Russian, dropped by to tell her husband they were having guests for luncheon. She was a pretty woman, with a narrow body. Even in a tweed suit she looked both fragile and muscular, like a Russian ballerina. She surveyed the Tibetans squatting along the walls, waiting their turn. "These are strange, aren't they?" she said.

"Very," replied her husband. "Apparently they've been traveling for nearly a year, begging along the way."

Prince Peter told us the flight of wealthy lamas and merchants from Tibet had stopped now. From one caravan, he bought a complete set of Tibetan scripture, 108 volumes, packed in fine yak skins. "I sent it on to Copenhagen, for the state museum there. This is a Danish expedition, you know."

As I watched Prince Peter measure some more of the strong, dirty faces, I thought of the poignant appeal the Tibetan Government had sent to the United Nations in October 1850.

"Tibetans have for long lived a cloistered life in their mountain fastness, remote and aloof from the rest of the world except in so far as His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, as the acknowledged head of the Buddhist

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Church, confers benediction and receives homage from followers in many countries. . . . There is little hope of a nation thus dedicated to peace resisting the brutal effort of men trained to war. But we understand that the United Nations have decided to stop aggression wherever it takes place. The armed invasion for the incorporation of Tibet within the folds of Chinese Communism through sheer physical force is a clear case of aggression. . . . We therefore appeal to the nations of the world to intercede in our behalf and restrain Chinese aggression. . . . With the approval of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we entrust the problem of Tibet in this emergency to the ultimate decision of the United Nations, in the hope that the conscience of the world will not allow the disruption of our State by methods reminiscent of the jungle."

Perhaps the three million Tibetans had been remote and aloof too long. Their country had been "The Forbidden Land," and it was not a member of the United Nations. At any rate, the conscience of the world was still, and Lhasa's last free call went unanswered.

We followed some of the measured, checked Tibetans as they sauntered through Kalimpong, gawking with slack-jawed wonder at the shop windows. Then they instinctively headed for the oldest part of town, a slum of wooden shanties hung over a gully. There they filed into a chilly barracks crowded with other pilgrims, awaiting a bowl of home-cooked stew from the hands of an American Anglican missionary, Father Walter Morse of Boston. Wearing an apron over his black cassock, Father Morse stirred a four-gallon kettle of mutton and vegetables over a charcoal fire, skillfully keeping his waist-length beard from falling in. The Tibetans sitting on the floor watched him with hungry eyes.

"Buddhist pilgrims think they are conferring a spiritual favor on me by accepting my help," chuckled Father Morse.

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"Perhaps they are." He passed out Vitamin-B tablets. "Every one of them has rickets or beriberi," he continued, "and they all have hideous sores. Never wash. But no sickness can keep them from reaching Bodh Gaya. That is where Buddha received enlightenment."

.. The missionary laid out cracked china bowls on a table and ladled out the stew. The Tibetans lunged for the dishes and swallowed the contents in a single gulp. "They get so many diseases when they leave their high, cold plateaus," Father Morse said. "Still, they come, to sit in the places where their Lord Buddha taught lessons much like Christ's. How they stand the heat of the Indian plains is something only the good Lord knows."

Before filing out of the door, the pilgrims stood in front of Father Morse for a moment, surveying his long gray beard respectfully. The American missionary raised his hand in a simple, international blessing.



## XIV

### Where I Came In

SOUTH of the Himalayan barrier lies the Indian state of Assam, a savage corner where India, China, and Burma meet. During World War II, Assam saw thousands of American G.I.'s, building airstrips and roads, fighting in the steamy jungles to stop the Japanese advance. Seven years after the war, the Assam railway still bore the marks of their passing: "D. D. T. 6/23/44"; "Red Cross Canteen"; "Kilroy Was Here." The Assam railway still crawled through stifling heat, dust, and flies with its passengers scratching their maddening prickly heat. We got off at Gauhati, to take a look at the airfield that had roared with American bombers, fighters, and cargo planes. Now, a torn windsock, a sagging operations shack, and a broken Coca-Cola dispenser were the only reminders that the Kilroys were there.

Three women in gold-embroidered, purple saris squatted on the ground, behind their barefoot husband, anxiously scanning the murky sky. The twice-weekly plane from Dibrugarh was overdue and so was the monsoon. Coolies nervously fidgeted with the rope-bound baskets of the passengers. Everybody was gripped by that peculiar tension that accompanies the wait for the rains.



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I remembered the lull before the monsoon of 1844 and a Red Cross club full of Brooklyn boys called "Merrill's Marauders," on their first leave in nearly three years from the jungles of Assam and Burma. They had been playing pinochle quietly for hours, munching an unbelievable quantity of doughnuts. Occasionally they heckled fly-boys from the Middle West who called themselves the "Burma Bridge Busters" and wore flight jackets painted with white skulls and bones.

Suddenly Merrill's Marauders and the Burma Bridge Busters were rolling around on the floor in fist fights. Coke bottles flew. A blond youngster pounded the piano with both fists in wild abandon. Another tore apart the cushions, throwing the kapok to the ceiling. Five minutes later the melee was over. Peace envoys representing Merrill's Marauders and the Burma Bridge Busters sheepishly apologized to each other and to me. "Hell, miss, it's just this waiting for the monsoon."

I remembered the Negroes from Detroit and Chicago who blasted and bulldozed the tangled trees and underbrush over the Naga Hills to make the Ledo Road, connecting Assam and Burma. A stretch would wash out before it was finished and they would have to begin the heartbreaking job all over again. Now the Ledo Road had gone back to the jungle. In some places not even a footpath was left. Giant ferns obliterated the tracks made by the American trucks.

For some reason the naked head-hunting Nagas befriended the Yank fliers who crashed in their hills. "Not only for our money or guns," a pilot once told me. "When the Nagas found me I had nothing on me but my burned uniform. But they took me to their village and hid me in one of their huts and put herbs on my burns. For six weeks I lay on the floor of that hut, looking at the smoked heads dangling from the rafters, and getting my strength back. The Nagas gave me a smoked human head as a souvenir, but they didn't take mine. I don't know why." When his burns had healed enough for him to walk, the Nagas led the pilot down a Jap-cleared trail

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and showed him the way to American-occupied Shillong. Then they slipped back into their hills.

It was late 1851 before the Indian Governor of Assam dared to visit the Naga Hills for the first time, and raise the flag of India. He was greeted with great courtesy and a parade of smoked heads. The Governor went back to Shillong; vety pleased. A few weeks later a band of Nagas slipped into an Assam village and neatly decapitated ninety people. A Deputy rose in India's Parliament and asked Nehru to explain the outrage. Nehru admitted that he did not understand Nagas at all.

These days the Nagas had American arms: gifts or purchases from the Americans who passed their way during a brief span of history. An educated Naga named Phizo was boss of the hills. During the war he fought with the Japs; now he was a good friend of Communist China. An Indian official told us Phizo might like to take a couple American heads to his new masters over the border in China, "as proof of his loyalty." He advised us not to visit the Naga Hills.

South of the Nagas lay Burma and the country of the Kachins. Somewhere back there, half-American kids were growing up, the babies of G.I.'s and Kachin girls. I recalled a handsome sergeant in shining parachute boots, a member of the "Jingpaw Rangers," that select group of American soldiers who were taught the Kachin dialect from phonograph records. He was dropped from an American plane onto a new, secret airfield deep in the Kachin country. Like many of the Jingpaw Rangers, the sergeant had "shacked up" with a Kachin girl. It was considered the best way to be protected, yet active. The sergeant's Kachin girl had been taught Christianity before the war. She said she would help her Yank only if they were properly married. She sewed the white silk of his parachute into a wedding dress. The two of them put their hands on an old Bible. A missionary-trained Kachin spoke the words of the Anglican marriage vows, and pro-

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claimed them husband and wife.

For nearly two years the girl hid her Yank by day while she walked the trails with a load on her head, looking for Japs. When she spied an encampment, a machine-gun nest, or a pillbox, she went back to her Yank and drew a map. By night the sergeant went out with one or two other Jingpaw Rangers and blew up the Jap emplacements. "The Japs searched the villages and tortured the Kachins, but they never found us—me and my Kachin girl," the sergeant told me. He fumbled in his breast pocket and pulled out a photograph.

"My kid, Johnny. He's four months old now." A naked, fat, round-faced child with Oriental eyes smiled at me from the glossy paper.

"And here she is." The second photo showed a pretty Kachin girl, slim and modest in a long-sleeved shirtwaist, with a sarong wound round her waist. She wore a flower over one ear and an expression of terrible sadness.

"I took that picture the day I left," he explained. "I argued with the pilot who had been sent to get me out, but he said his orders were that every American had to leave the Kachin country. If I didn't go, I'd be declared A.W.O.L., and my family wouldn't get my G.I. insurance and, oh hell, I don't know what all the pilot said."

"Do you have a wife in the States?" I asked.

"No. I'm only married to her." He took back the photographs. "I told my C.O. I wanted to get my discharge in Calcutta and go back to the Kachin country. You know what he did? He sent me to some damned Army psychiatrist to find out if I was section eight. Then I had to see the chaplain and talk it over with him. I am not nuts. And some day, by God, I am going back to the Kachins. I told her I'd be back, to take care of her and my kid."

"Maybe some day you can bring her to the States with you."

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The sergeant reflected a moment. His lips were parted in a crooked smile. I never forgot that smile—was it shame, or derision?

"You look sort of like my Kachin girl," he said slowly. "How do you get along in the States?"

"Fine, as an adult. But it's kind of tough on youngsters. The other kids in school will yell 'Chink-Chink-Chinaman'—stuff like that."

"Are you a half-caste, miss?"

"No, but everybody thinks so, because of the way my eyes are made."

"If anybody ever calls my kid 'Chink' I'll beat his brains out."

"That's what my blue-eyed father used to say—it doesn't help any."

The sergeant stretched out on the grass in front of the Red Cross club and squinted into the sun, possibly to excuse the tears that were in his eyes. "I don't know what I'm going to do in the States," he said after a while. "To make money, I mean. All I know is the Kachin dialect and how to set a demolition that always goes off. Instead of bringing her and the kid to the States, I'd rather go live with the Kachins. What do you think?"

"I think you ought to go back to the States first, take a long look at your home town, and then decide."

The sound of a plane interrupted my reverie and I was brought back to Assam, seven years later. My husband touched my arm and pointed upward. "I don't know how that pilot is going to get down in this soup." Those words had been so familiar, seven years before.

"During the war the Hump pilots flew in any weather, from muddy, slippery fields."

"I was thinking of them, too," replied Weller. "Including the ones that crashed."

The plane could be seen now, emerging from the mist, an American-built C-47, in a steep bank, its landing wheels

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down. No one stirred as it wobbled a bit, straightened out, and then safely touched the ground. The pilot, a bearded Sikh in a white uniform and turban, jumped out of the plane and formed his hands into a megaphone.

"Passengers for Calcutta," he yelled, "on the double! We take off in five minutes." His accent sounded American rather than British. I wondered if we had taught him to fly, at Agra, during the war.

The coolies dragged the luggage across the field and threw it in the plane. A ladder was drawn up for the passengers, led by the barefoot Indian merchant in a dhoti and white cotton jacket. His three wives, their noses, ears, and chins inset with diamonds, twittered in fear as they followed their husband into the plane.

"Come on," said Weller, picking up his typewriter. "That Sikh is a good pilot. I trust him." We took off into the enveloping whiteness, bound for Calcutta and a six months' tour of Southeast Asia.

A slimy canal in Bangkok, a vivid green rice paddy in Java, a bullet-chipped fort along the Hanoi—Haiphong road meant much more to me now, seen the second time. Somehow they had become landmarks in my life. Little Indonesians and Indochinese I had known as students and revolutionaries had become conservative government officials, who disliked being reminded of the days when they were full of ideals, passion, and daring.

Some Americans in Southeast Asia also hated to be reminded of bygone days. At a Bangkok swimming pool, I bumped into a paratrooper I had met during the war, after he had walked through most of Burma's jungles. Now he was working for the Siamese Government, training paratroopers near the Burma border he knew so well, but he didn't want to talk about his job. When I questioned him casually, on the high diving board, he swan-dived off, swam under water the length of the pool, headed for the dressing room, and disappeared. In the spring of 1852, Southeast Asia's newspapers

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were full of stories about Americans who were parachuting into Burma again. Burmese officials claimed they were supplying and instructing Chiang Kai-shek's troops in Burma. During the previous year remnants of Chiang Kai-shek's defeated armies had been setting themselves up along the Burma-China border, where they lived off levies and loot from Burmese villages. Now these Chinese troops were being reinforced by new instructors and new generals who had been seen in Chiang's Headquarters on Formosa only a few weeks before. Everybody in Bangkok guessed they had been flown from Formosa to Siam by an American airline owned by Claire Chennault, the former Flying Tiger, and then dropped by parachute onto new fields held by Chiang's troops in Burma's Kengtung Province.

Weller talked to Willis Byrd, an ex-Colonel of O. S. S., now the Bangkok representative of a business called "Sea Supplies Corporation" and an agent of Claire Chennault's Formosa-Bangkok airline. Byrd admitted he was selling arms—but only to the Siamese police. Americans were training the Siamese police in the use of their new arms at Lopburi, a parachute-training station near the Burmese border. Strangely enough, the Americans employed by the Siamese Government at Lopburi were former O. S. S. men who knew Burma well.

We flew to Rangoon in May 1952. Burmese Army commanders spread out maps to show us where the new Chinese landing strips were located in Kengtung Province, where new training stations had been set up, where the Burmese Army found a new "American" helicopter that had crashed before it made its field. They described the new American rifles Chiang's troops were selling to anyone who could pay the thirty-rupee price.

"What are the names of the Americans you claim supply these Chinese troops?" asked Weller. Out came the name of the mysterious Johnson again. We had heard of him before—a gun-runner who bought up surplus American supplies in the Philippines and sold them to anyone, regardless of poli-

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tics. He had supplied the Indonesians in their war against the Dutch, the Malayan Communists against the British, the Egyptians and the Israelis during the Palestine war. Somehow Johnson never got caught.

Then the Burmese mentioned the Stewarts. Which Stewart? One was a former pilot for Claire Chennault; another was an Australian, not an American, whom we had met in China when he was a colonel training paratroopers for Chiang Kai-shek. Still another Stewart once worked for the United States Information Service in China and now worked for something called "the Committee for Free Asia." The Burmese thought one of the Stewarts, or all of them, had been in Burma, supplying and advising Chiang's troops within the last year.

The Burmese Army was too weak to venture into the areas held by Chiang's troops and disarm them. The Burmese Army was fighting the "White Flag Communists" and the "Red Flag Communists" in central Burma and the Karens in the south, in the Irrawaddy Delta. The Karens wanted "autonomy" now and Chiang's Chinese were finding them good customers for their new American arms.

Burmese officials funneled their indignation and frustration against Americans and we felt thoroughly hated. Finally, the American Chargé d'Affaires in Rangoon, Henry Day, had to make a calming statement. "To the best of American official knowledge," he said, "the American Government is ~~not~~ aiding Chiang's troops in Burma with arms and advisers." The Burmese laughed and called him a liar. He added, later, that "there might be some American adventurers with Chiang's forces, but the State Department has no control over them."

I thought of that Jingpaw Ranger again, the sergeant who swore he would go back to his wife in Burma, and wondered if he was an "American adventurer" now. Was that ex-Burma paratrooper who evaded me at the Bangkok swimming pool an American adventurer, too?

I asked a lot of questions about the American ~~adventurers~~

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and got only one clear answer. "Ever hear of Public Law 283 passed by the Eightieth Congress?" asked one of my friends one day. "It exempts our Central Intelligence Agency from reporting how much taxpayers' money it gets, or what it does with it. Sure, the C.I.A. spooks work with a business called Sea Supplies Corporation in Bangkok and called Western Enterprises in Formosa. Same outfit. Sure, it's connected with Claire Chennault's airline. Sure, American spooks are training Siamese police with nice new American arms, near the Burmese border. Everybody knows all this and it can be proved. But how are you going to check the next step—that the spooks and their helicopters are going over the Siam-Burma border and dropping supplies to Chiang Kai-shek's troops in Burma's Kengtung Province?"

We couldn't prove that. Burma's Ministry of the Interior would allow no Americans to go to Kengtung Province legally, claiming even reporters would be "provocation for the Chinese Communists to come over." But Weller spread out maps and notebooks on the floor of our Rangoon hotel room, trying to fit the pieces of the story together. He had a feeling that "American adventurers not under the control of the State Department" could plunge American foreign policy into just as much trouble as the clumsiest of diplomats.

I glanced at one of the maps of Burma one morning and remarked I didn't know Myitkyina and Bhamo were so close to the Chinese border.

"Where did you think they were?" asked Weller.

"Just some place in Burma. I remember the day the Americans captured Bhamo. We had a victory party in our Red Cross club. Everybody thought the war was over."

"Do you care where Bhamo is now?"

"Yes."

"You'd better, because there are Chinese troops near Bhamo right now and I'm not sure they are Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese."

"Well, whose, then?"



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"Our old friend Chow Pao-chung is in charge of China's western border, including Burma."

I felt a fleeting moment of panic. Chow Pao-chung again, the master guerrilla fighter, the master infiltrator. Chow Pao-chung, first in Manchuria, then Tibet, now near Burma. I could still see his triumphant face, pitted with scars, the day he boasted to us that a Chinese Communist Army had crossed the Yellow Sea to Manchuria under the noses of unsuspecting Americans on destroyers who thought they were just fishermen. I could still see Chow Pao-chung's spiky hair and the face of the Chinese Communist soldier standing in back of him, protecting him with a tommy gun made in Russia.

"What if the American spooks are handing out arms to Chow Pao-chung's Chinese soldiers instead of Chiang Kai-shek's, because they can't always tell them apart?" I asked.

"I've been thinking of that for two days," replied my husband. "And I wish to God I didn't have to."

Rangoon's gilded Shwe Dagon pagoda was crowded with worshippers, seeking Buddha and peace. The Government offices were rimmed with barbed wire. Burmese Government officials lived outside of town, in guarded compounds, fearing assassination. The newspapers reported another Burmese train had been stopped. The passengers were robbed, two killed. Ships could not ply the Irrawaddy without running the risk of being hijacked. The highways were mined, the bridges blown, homes burned, the wealthy kidnapped and held for ransom. The poor were strangled with taxes levied by the guerrilla armies.

Yet Burma's Defense Minister, U Ba Swe, had just made a speech asserting that "Buddhism and Marxism are the same concept." A Chinese Communist cultural delegation arrived in Rangoon to admire the pagodas and prattle about peaceful Buddhist philosophy, common to both China and Burma.

We dropped in to see Burma's "Minister for Karen Affairs," a sweet-voiced, forty-eight-year-old grandmother, Mrs.

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Ba Maung Chain, who was supposed to charm the armies of rebel Karens into surrender because she was the daughter of a respected Karen chief. She was a dainty woman in a white shirtwaist and a printed silk sarong. She was warm and womanly and smiled at us sweetly.

"Burma's eighteen million people suffered more than any others in World War II," she said. "About half our buildings, our productive equipment, and all our petroleum refineries and pipelines were blown up during the fighting against the Japanese." Nevertheless, Burma had refused to accept any more technical, economic, or military aid from the United States because all Burmese were convinced that Americans aided the Chinese troops in their countryside.

Weller asked Mrs. Ba Maung Chain what she, as Minister for Karen Affairs, did about the Karen guerrillas. We were especially interested in the Karens because many of them had been educated by American Baptist missionaries.

"I try to help by making little trips to the edge of the rebel country to talk to the leaders and reason with them," she replied. "One hope we have is that the Karen parents are getting tired of their children missing education."

The Burmese Army was helping Mrs. Ba Maung Chain's "reasoning" by sending columns of tanks and artillery to splinter the Karen Armies. Everybody in Rangoon admitted that the tiny Minister for Karen Affairs had a very difficult job and nobody else wanted it.

As usual, a telegram from Stuffy Walters, Weller's editor, suddenly changed our life. Weller was ordered back to Rome. I left the Orient with real regret, this time, because it seemed to me that Europe was no longer the nerve-center of the world. The foreign events that affected American families these days started in Oriental rice paddies.

But in Rome I quickly became reabsorbed in the problem of how to make a roast in an Italian oven, with wildly fluctuating gas pressure. I became convinced that the lovely Eternal City, because of its stoves, might blow up any day.

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Fortunately Stuffy, who liked the gossipy letters I sent to his wife, Reah, offered me a job writing women's news and features. I went happily back to work, on a one-article-a-week basis, which would keep me relaxed enough for Weller's taste.

In the spring of 1953, Weller was assigned to the United Nations. Stalin died. The delegates hurried down the soft green carpets of the U. N.'s skyscraper, which was illuminated with new hope.

The Government of Burma asked the United Nations to help get Chiang Kai-shek's troops out of the Burmese border area, somehow. The representatives of the world lingered over their coffee cups in the delegates' dining room, chatting in a dozen different tongues. Some were idealists; two or three sold their votes for money; some were Machiavellians, some dupes. But perhaps the U. N. could do something about Burma. Perhaps the glass shaft on the East River wouldn't be without meaning, after all.

We found seats in the packed press gallery and watched the delegates file into the conference room with their brief cases. As the meeting was called to order, the television cameras swung to the round, smooth face of Dr. T. F. Tsiang, Chiang Kai-shek's representative to the United Nations. The sheaf of papers in Dr. Tsiang's hand trembled a little, but he was a Chinese scholar and soon regained his poise. He spoke in English, with hardly a trace of accent, very clearly, with a firm voice. He said Chiang's Government had "lost control over most of the Chinese troops in Burma," and added: "They are not acting under our instructions."

As if to give substance to Dr. Tsiang's words, Chinese troops attacked near Moulmein, the Burmese city made famous by Kipling for its pagoda, flying fishes, and a dawn that "comes up like thunder outer China 'cross the Bay." The country around Moulmein has wolfram, antimony, lead, and tin. Why did the Chinese guerrillas attack there, at this time, at this moment of great embarrassment to Chiang Kai-shek's

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Formosa Government? Could they be Chow Pao-chung's Chinese by any chance?

But on the day the U. N. heard Dr. Tsiang's words, the Burmese and the Indians smiled, wise smiles of unbelief. The cameras swung toward Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., who lowered his head and seemed a little bewildered. The galleries stirred, sensing the different reactions to Dr. Tsiang's statement that his Government did not control most of the Chinese troops in Burma. Only the Russians and the Communist bloc seemed unsurprised. Vishinsky's white head was absolutely still, but his eyes watched the Asians passing notes to each other.

Delegates from the United States, Liberia, Iraq, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Lebanon rose to make speeches deploring "the hostile activities and depredations of foreign forces on the territory of Burma." They declared the Chinese troops in Burma must be "disarmed and deported." The delegates fumbled among their papers and reread an American statement: "The U. S. A. has made representations to Formosa to have the Chinese troops withdrawn from Burma. To the extent that it is possible for one sovereign government to put pressure on another sovereign government that pressure has been exerted." On the fifth day of the Burma Question, the delegates were ready for a vote.

The galleries were hushed, watching as each delegate raised his hand, signifying that he supported the resolution, stating that: "Any assistance given to the Chinese forces in Burma which enables them to remain in Burma or to continue their hostile acts against a member state is contrary to the U. N. charter." Vishinsky's hand was raised at the same time Lodge's hand came up. The galleries murmured; some laughed for joy at this incredible sight. The chairman announced the vote: 59 to 0 with only Dr. T. F. Tsiang abstaining. It was a record vote on a major issue. Vishinsky smiled. Lodge grinned. The Asians looked dazed. People

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fled out to the corridors, saying the U. N. could work after all. In the delegates' lounge, glasses were raised to the new life in the U. N. An Indian delegate and an American delegate were sitting side by side in the low, modernistic chairs, facing the glass wall and the East River. I eavesdropped.

"Do you actually believe that Chiang Kai-shek does not control those Chinese troops in Burma?" asked the Indian.

"Some, he does. Most of them he does not," answered the American.

"Then how does the U. N. get most of them out?" inquired the Indian. His tone indicated it was only an academic question and the American didn't think it necessary to answer.

"The delegate from Burma," paged the U. N. loudspeaker. "Will the delegate from Burma come to the reception desk, please?" The feminine voice had an urgency in it, as if the delegate from Burma were wanted at an operating table. A small man with a tan face and Oriental eyes rose and hurried out of the delegates' lounge. A hundred other eyes, peering over newspapers and drinks, watched him push open the glass doors, wondering who wanted to see the delegate from Burma now.

The United Nations had nearly 3,000 sightseers that day, mostly Americans. One of them remarked, not unkindly, that all Orientals looked alike to her.

"Sh-sh," warned her friend. "There's one. Right beside you." They looked at me.

"I wonder what outlandish place she comes from."

I thought of all the outlandish places I had come from, and all the different Orientals I had seen, with brown, tan, ruddy, or yellow skins, and the tiny folds of their eyelids. No, their eyes were not all alike. Some were friendly, others hostile, most of them neutral. Somehow I felt nearer to them than ever before.



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